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AMALENDU BOSE, M.A., D.PHIL. (OXON.), F.I.A.L.

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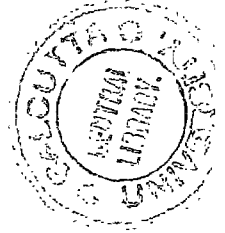
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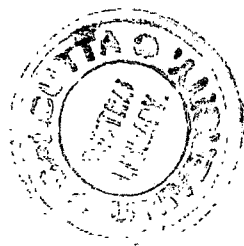
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THE CALCUTTA REVIEW

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RAJA RAMMOHUN ROY—A HISTORICAL REVIEW

R. C. MAJUMDAR

The most remarkable thing about Rammohun Roy is the extraordinary changes in the public estimate of his personality and achievements. He was not a public figure at all even when he was forty years of age. Then, when he began his campaign against idolatry, he was strongly denounced by the entire Hindu community with the exception of a handful of personal friends and followers. In his so-called autobiographical sketch (which some attribute to his English Secretary), he says that he was "deserted by every person except two or three Scotch friends".¹ In any case, his fame was limited to a very small section of the public at the time of his death. Apart from other evidences this may be deduced from the account of the first memorial meeting after his death held in the Town Hall, Calcutta, in April, 1834.² The speakers, mostly Englishmen, referred to his profound learning and philanthropy, and a resolution was passed that steps be taken to perpetuate his memory. That nothing was done in this respect was admitted by Dwijendranath Tagore, an eminent Brahmo leader, in his presidential address at the next (so far as known to me) memorial meeting held in 1878 at his house.³ He referred to Rammohun as the pride and glory of the Brahmos, and all the speakers were members of the Brahmo community. In 1882 Rammohun was described as a Divine Agent by his biographer, who quoted Akshay Kumar Datta as saying that Rammohan was a unique man the like of whom had never appeared in India.⁴ Four years later, Rabindranath Tagore wrote that Modern Bengal was Rammohun's creation (literally, 'we have inherited the present culture of Bengal from Rammohun').⁵ The climax was reached when the same Rabindranath said in 1933, "Rammohun Roy

inaugurated the Modern Age in India.....Rammohun belongs to the lineage of India's great seers."⁶ Needless to add that these views have been echoed in speeches and writings during the recent celebrations of his second birth centenary.

Thus the pendulum has swung from one end to the other, and it is the task of the historian to find out the truth as far as possible. This article is written solely with this object in view.

Rammohun's life may be broadly divided into two periods, namely before and after 1815, when, at the age of more than forty, he retired from service and settled in Calcutta. Nothing happened during the first period to mark him as a distinguished personality in any way, except the fact that when he was about thirty he wrote a book in Persian propounding the view that the true Hindu religion is based upon monotheism, and idolatry has no place in it. But he made no public propaganda and no stir was created in the public by his heterodox views. Rammohun lived as a Hindu in his family, looked after the ancestral property of his father, and when the latter died, performed his *Sradh* ceremony. Rammohun's son also performed his *Sradh* ceremony. As often happens in the case of men who attain celebrity late in life, the real facts of Rammohun's early life were not remembered and a rich crop of legends took their place. As a matter of fact, except the parentage and the place of birth, almost everything that is accepted by his devoted followers as true of the first thirty years of his life, is either palpably false or extremely doubtful, and in any case is not supported by authentic evidence.

The year of his birth, on the basis of which his bi-centenary was celebrated in 1972, is most likely not 1772 but 1774. I have discussed the question at length in a lecture at the Asiatic Society which has been published⁷ and hence it need not be discussed here in detail. But I may add that after the publication of my lecture, a friend has written to me from London that the obituary notice of Rammohun in the *London Times* supports the date 1774 advocated by me.

The current account of his study of Arabic at Patna and Sanskrit at Banaras is very doubtful, and the *embellishment* of the story to the effect that he spent ten years at Banaras is certainly wrong. The current story that he wrote a treatise against idolatry at the age of 16 and was expelled twice from the house by his father, is certainly a later fabrication, and the story of his consequent wandering all over India ending in a visit to Tibet, is extremely doubtful. According to Dr. Carpenter, a great personal friend of Rammohun, the latter personally told him that the object of his wandering about was quite different, and it is noteworthy that though Rammohun refers to his visit to many regions he does not mention Tibet. According to a record recently discovered, Rammohun visited Bhutan towards the end of 1815 as an official of the Collector

of Rangpur, and as Tibet was the suzerain power of Bhutan the legend probably grew out of it.⁸

Rammohun served as *Sheristadar* of a Collector, and when he was not confirmed in that post in spite of the strong recommendations of Mr. Digby under whom he served, the latter appointed him as a private employee under him. Though the current account is that Rammohun was an employee of the East India Company for nine years from 1806 to 1814, it is wrong.⁹ He served as *Sheristadar* of the Fauzdari Court at Ramgarh for about three months and a temporary *Diwan* under Digby at Rangpur for a little over a year, from December, 1809, to March, 1811. B. N. Banerji thinks that as he was not confirmed in his post as *Diwan* he served in a private capacity under Digby and retired in 1814 when Digby left. But, as mentioned above, we find him visiting Bhutan as an employee of the Company in 1815, so the above account is not probably quite correct. The salary of the *Sheristadar* or the *Diwan*—the two posts held by Rammohun—could not possibly have been a large amount, and yet he was very rich and in quite affluent circumstances when he settled down in Calcutta after ten years of service. Some have estimated the annual income from his property to be about ten thousand rupees. This point is not discussed by his biographers or devotees, and hence deserves a detailed treatment.

Rammohun was born in a rich family and his father divided his estate among his three sons by a deed of gift in 1796^{9a}. But some time about 1800 Rammohun's father lost everything he possessed and was sent to prison for failure to pay rents. In 1801 Rammohun's elder brother Jagamohan was also sent to prison, and the family was reduced to penury. Jagamohan was in prison till 1805. Throughout this period Rammohun alone in his family was in very affluent circumstances. In 1802 he lent five thousand rupees to a Civilian Collector and was shortly after employed as *Diwan* under him for a short period¹⁰. In 1803 he purchased some estates and before he retired he was owner of extensive property yielding an annual rent of ten thousand rupees. Besides, he purchased two houses in Calcutta from two Europeans at a cost of more than thirty-three thousand rupees and built a new house at Raghunathpur close to the village where he spent his boyhood¹¹. He lived in his well-furnished house in Calcutta amid great luxury and we have reports of the parties he gave at his house in which European guests including ladies were entertained by drinking and dancing girls¹².

Such difference in opulence between Rammohun and his brother cannot be explained by the salary he drew as *Sheristadar* or *Diwan*, and in other capacities for a period of ten years only.^{12a} Rammohun must have had other sources of income. So far as I know, his biographers and devotees who have referred to so many virtues of Rammohun, have not referred to his business acumen, such as money-lending, acting

as Banyan, buying and purchasing Government papers, etc. which have been mentioned by B. N. Banerji.¹³ If true, it must be said to the credit of Rammohun that he combined a very high intellectual capacity and an intensely religious mind with great skill in such mundane affairs—a rather rare combination indeed. But B. N. Banerji has not given any detail except a reference to Rammohun's lending money to a civilian, mentioned above, and another instance of money-lending which is calculated to bring discredit to Rammohun in our opinion. B. N. Banerji says that while Jagamohan was rotting in jail for default in payment of rents he repeatedly wrote to his rich younger brother Rammohun for pecuniary help to repay his debt amounting to Rs. 4,358 only. But, we are told, that after a prolonged correspondence Rammohun paid a sum of Rs. 1,000 only after regularly executing a legal deed by which the amount lent was to be repaid with interest. This is, no doubt, fully in consonance with the spirit of a professional money-lender, but is hard to believe even in the case of an ordinary man, not to speak of a man of the stature of Rammohun Roy. But B. N. Banerji evidently made the suggestion of money-lending as a regular source of Rammohan's income, in order to defend him against a charge which is still more damaging to the moral character of Rammohan. For even Kishorichand Mitra, a great admirer of Rammohun, who wrote an appreciative biography of him in the *Calcutta Review* in 1843, broadly hinted at bribery as the source of Rammohan's wealth. For in those days, as even in much later times, the *Sheristadar* or *Diwan* of a Civilian Collector had ample opportunity of amassing a huge wealth by accepting bribes, though a venerable English gentleman who wrote a history of the Brahmo Samaj, protested against the charge of bribery, but explained it as the "legal perquisites" which the *Diwans* in those days were accustomed to accept.¹⁴ It may be mentioned in this connection that while rejecting the recommendation of Digby for the appointment of Rammohun as a permanent *Diwan* the President of the Board of Revenue recorded a note in the file to the effect that "unfavourable mention of his (Rammohun's) conduct" while he was *Sheristadar* at Ramgadh had reached his ears.¹⁵

But whatever explanation we may accept, the accumulation of wealth and the luxurious manner in which the ex-*Sheristadar* or *Diwan* Rammohan lived in Calcutta after he was above forty, is hardly consistent with the view expressed by Rabindranath Tagore that "Rammohun belongs to the lineage of India's great 'Seers' who age after age have appeared in the arena of our history with the message of eternal man."¹⁶ In spite of the great respect which is undoubtedly due to the words of Rabindranath it is difficult to assign to Rammohun the epithet 'Seer' which is normally used in the sense of *Rishi* and we are apt to apply to such men as Ramakrishna, Vivekananda or Arabinda of the age to which Rammohun belonged.

Further, whatever we may think of the allegations or dark hints of bribery, in the absence of any definite evidence, one thing seems to be certain, namely, that at the end of the first period of his life when he settled down in Calcutta in 1815 (not 1814 as is generally supposed and accepted even by B. N. Banerji)¹⁷ Rammohun was not, and had not come to be, regarded as a great man in any sense of the term. The claim made by Rabindranath Tagore and others that Rammohun "inaugurated the Modern Age in India" obviously rests upon his activities and achievements *after* 1815, to which we may now turn.

According to the so-called autobiography of Rammohun, the authenticity of which, as mentioned above, is justly doubted, when he published books and tracts propounding his monotheistic doctrine he was "deserted by every person except two or three Scotch friends". But, to start with, shortly after his arrival in Calcutta, he founded the *Atmiya Sabha* consisting of a small number of persons sympathising with his reformatory doctrines. There is no doubt, however, that the number of real sympathisers with his views was very small. The weekly meetings of this *Sabha*, held in his own house, served as the means of propagating his doctrine of the superiority of the monotheistic creed. In addition to this, Rammohun held debates with learned orthodox Pandits and translated into Bengali the Vedanta and a number of Upanishads in quick succession. These and other tracts and treatises established his reputation as a profound scholar and gave wide publicity to his monotheistic doctrines and condemnation of idolatry. He also published a book expounding the moral and spiritual precepts of Jesus Christ, but denouncing the narratives of his miracles. Rammohun thereby incurred the hostility of both the orthodox Hindus and the Christian missionaries. But with exemplary industry and patience, he carried on, almost single-handed, controversy with both, displaying knowledge of many languages—Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, English, Greek, Latin, French, Hebrew—and religious literatures, a wonderful capacity of logical argument and keen discernment, and a vision of universal humanity much in advance of his age. All this established his reputation as a great personality which was not confined to Bengal. His numerous publications, both in English and Bengali, during the decade 1815-1825, were not confined to religious texts but also covered a wide range such as the condemnation of the *Sati* rite, protests against 'modern encroachments on the ancient rights of females according to Hindu law of inheritance', etc. a list of which has been given with dates in his biography by B. N. Banerji,¹⁸ and different editions of his works have been published in recent times.

At the crest of the wave of popularity and admiration of his friends and followers, Rammohun founded in 1828 the *Brahma Sabha* which was intended merely as a 'place for the unsectarian worship of the One True

God,' The Church was formally opened in its own house in 1830. It was clearly laid down that the building could be used by anybody for the worship and adoration of one Supreme God but not under or by any other name, designation or title, and without any image or picture. The new Church was not, therefore, a special property of any sect, but only a meeting-ground of all who believe in monotheism and discard idolatry. As a great leader of the Brahmo community has justly observed: "the mission of Rammohun Roy was simple, namely, to call his countrymen to discard idolatry and come to the worship of the One True God. His work was mainly negative and reformatory and not positive or constructive."

The newly founded Brahmo Samaj was reduced to a moribund condition after Rammohun's death and was revived by Devendranath Tagore in 1843. But within 25 years it was finally split into three Churches, (Adi, Bharatvarshiya and Sadharan). The first two of these are now in a moribund condition and the number of followers of the third today does not exceed two hundred.¹⁹ The only legacies they inherited from Rammohun were the monotheistic creed and rejection of idolatry, to which the last two added important features, specially various social reforms. Rammohun (or his expressed views) has no concern with any of these and he was opposed to most of them.

It is unnecessary for our present purpose to discuss how far Rammohun was right in his contention that true Hinduism is not consistent with belief in a multiplicity of gods and the worship of their images. The more pertinent question is how far he inaugurated the Modern Age in this respect, or, as Rabindranath put it in his Bengali article on Rammohun, "how far he dispelled the gloom of ages and laid the foundation of the Bengali Society of the present day."²⁰ The reply is writ large in blazing letters upon the illumined gates of more than two thousand Durga Puja pandals in Calcutta whose loud speakers and *Dhaks* or trumpets proclaim in deafening noise, year after year, the failure of Rammohun in the principal mission of his life. It has not produced the slightest effect upon 99·9 per cent of the vast Hindu *Samaj* which contains more than 80 per cent of the people of India. So far as the Hindu religion is concerned the Modern Age in India was inaugurated, not by Rammohun but by Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.

It would hardly be denied that English education has been the chief factor in creating the Modern Age in India. There is absolutely no basis for the claim that Rammohun was the pioneer of English education in Bengal. As mentioned above, Rammohun settled down in Calcutta towards the close of 1815. We possess definite evidence that there was a great demand for English education among the orthodox Hindus of Calcutta long before, and it resulted in the foundation of the Hindu College, which was the chief centre from which English education and

Western ideas flowed all over Bengal. A largely attended meeting of the orthodox Hindus was held at the house of the Chief Justice Sir Hyde East on 14th May, 1816, and this led to the adoption of the plan of the proposed college for imparting modern education on Western lines to the Hindus alone, for according to the fundamental constitution of the institution it was open to none but the Hindus. It would be ridiculous to pretend that Rammohun, who had settled in Calcutta only a few months before, after many years' absence in Moffussil areas in Bengal and Bihar, could have possibly any hand in mobilising public opinion in favour of English education, as his devoted followers have gratuitously assumed. In any case there is unimpeachable evidence that Rammohun had nothing to do with the foundation of the Hindu College. It is also worth consideration whether in view of the known religious views of Rammohun, the Hindus would have anything to do with him in founding the Hindu College meant for the orthodox Hindus ; actually one of the Brahmins who attended the inaugural meeting definitely expressed the view that even subscription should not be accepted from Rammohun Roy. On the other hand, it is equally worth consideration whether a man of liberal views and catholic spirit like Rammohun Roy would associate himself with a denominational institution meant for a particular community alone. But those who are out to prove that the Modern Age is the creation of Rammohun can hardly accept the position that he had nothing to do with the institution which was mainly instrumental in creating that Age. This explains the persistent attempt to put forward Rammohun as the founder of the Hindu College. I have discussed the point at great length in my lecture mentioned above and need not dwell further on this subject as that lecture has been published.²¹ I may only note here a few points of interest. Rammohun's name was not mentioned in connection with the foundation of the Hindu College till 1862. Until then the debate centred round the respective shares of the credit due to Hyde East and David Hare for its foundation. It was in 1862, i.e. 45 years after the foundation of the Hindu College that Rammohun was said to have shared the credit with David Hare, Hyde East's name having been altogether dropped. It was not till the thirties of the present century that Hare's name also was dropped and Rammohun alone was given the credit for the foundation of the Hindu College. When I pointed out the absurdity of the argument on which this claim was based, the devotees of Rammohun again allowed David Hare to share the credit with Rammohun. Rammohun's followers are highly indignant with the Hindus of those days for having expelled Rammohun from the 'Committee of Management' of the Hindu College (according to another version Rammohun himself withdrew from the Committee in view of the objection of the Hindus), and hold it as an

example of the narrowness of their outlook, being blissfully ignorant of the fact that such admission goes against the assumption that Rammohun founded the Hindu College. The fact, however, is that we possess the full list of the names of members of the first Managing Committee and Rammohun's name does not occur there. As a matter of fact Rammohun was never a member of the Committee; nor had he anything to do with the College at any stage of its career. During my sixty years' experience as a research student of history I have hardly met with any other historical conclusion on a disputed point which is supported by such unimpeachable evidence. It is easy to awaken a sleeping man but not one who pretends to sleep. Rammohun's followers are determined not to admit that Rammohun had nothing to do with the premier institution in Bengal which must be regarded as the most important single factor for ushering in the Modern Age which, according to them, was inaugurated by Rammohun.

Since the publication of my lecture, mentioned above, in which I sought to prove that Rammohun had nothing to do with the foundation of the Hindu College, fresh evidence has come to light in support of this view. The first is the following statement published in the *Asiatic Journal* of February, 1817 (pp. 133-4), to the following effect:

'A second meeting for the purpose of establishing a Hindu College was held at the house of Hyde East. A Committee was formed to formulate the general plan, which laid down that "the primary object of the institution (was to) be the tuition of the sons of respectable Hindus in the English and Indian languages and in the literature and science of Europe."

The names of the members of the committee are given, but neither Rammohun nor David Hare is included in the list. The second is a long discussion on the gradual spread of English education in Bengal in the same *Asiatic Journal* (1835, Part I, p. 235). After referring to the sporadic efforts for teaching English in Bengal, it continues:

'In 1817, however, the institution of the Vidyalay or Anglo-Indian College by the natives assisted and directed by a Committee of English gentlemen presided over by the then Chief Justice, Sir H. East, gave an improved character to English study.'

The third is the following comment in the same *Asiatic Journal* of 1839 (Part I, p. 269): "Rammohun Roy was the representative of a class of great respectability and some members, who carried this dissatisfaction [with the intellectual condition of their countrymen] to their religious state also. But a still more numerous and equally respectable body, whilst they adhered to the faith of their fathers, and retained their veneration for their sacred learning, admitted the superiority of European science and desired to promote the cultivation of English on a scale beyond the acquirement of the language as the mere instrument of public business or commercial enterprise. Of this party were Chandra Kumar Thakur,

Radhakant Dev [other names follow]... and about the year 1816-17 they united with the principal European residents of Calcutta in forming a School Society, a School Book Society and an English College—the Vidyalaya or Anglo-Indian College.”

These statements fully corroborate the conclusion I have arrived at after full discussion in my lecture.

We may now proceed to discuss Rammohun's contribution to some other prominent characteristic features of the Modern Age in order to test the validity of the claim that he inaugurated it.

Rammohun has been hailed as the father of Bengali prose literature which had a phenomenal development in the 19th century but had no existence at the beginning of it. The claim that Rammohun was the creator of Bengali Prose is belied by patent facts. The first two Bengali prose books of Rammohun—translations of two Vedanta treatises—were published in 1815. But the Pandits of the Fort William College had published prose books in Bengali before that. Thus Mrityunjay Bhattacharya published three books, the first two in 1802 and the other book in 1808. Ramram Basu published one book in 1801, and Rajiblochan Mukhopadhyaya, another in 1804. William Carey, Head of the Bengali Department in that College, composed a Grammar of the Bengali language and another book in 1812, and translated the Bible in Bengali in 1801. All these books, written before Rammohun Roy had settled in Calcutta and begun to write Bengali books, would not suffer in regard to style in comparison with that of Rammohun.²² As in the case of the Hindu College, some modern devotees of Rammohun have, in spite of these, tried to uphold the claim of Rammohun by belittling the works of his predecessors. Thus Dr. Sukumar Sen asserts that Rammohun “was the first writer of Bengali prose outside of textbooks”.^{22a} Apart from the fact that in judging of the prose style it is immaterial whether a book written in Bengali, was used as a textbook, the assertion is incorrect inasmuch as Mrityunjay Vidyalankar wrote his book *Prabodhchandrīka* in 1813, two years before Rammohun made his debut. This book was extensively read up to the seventh decade of the 19th century and the University of Calcutta published a special edition of it in his honour.^{22b} But the contemporaries rightly gave the credit for the Bengali prose to the Pandits of the Fort William College. It is refreshing to note that an eminent contemporary of Rammohun, Dewan Ramkamal Sen, in the preface to his *Dictionary in English and Bengali* unreservedly attributed to Carey and his colleagues of the Fort William College the ‘establishment of Bengali as a language’, and observed that “from their time forward writing Bengali correctly may be said to have begun in Calcutta.” In 1835 the reviewer of this book remarked : “It was by the unrestricted employment of Sanskrit expressions that Dr. Carey and his school qualified the Bengali tongue to become the vehicle of useful and entertaining

knowledge and it is by treading in his steps that the language has since been rendered capable of conveying new and complicated ideas."²³

As regards periodicals in Bengali language Rammohun Roy is said to be the "pioneer of Bengali journals edited by the Bengalis." The known facts are these. A Bengali Weekly Journal, named *Bangal Gazeti*, edited by a Bengali or jointly by two Bengalis, was issued in May, 1818. Another Weekly called *Samachar Darpan* was issued in the same year, probably a few days later. Though Marshman was its nominal editor till 1841, it was really conducted by the Indian Pandits. Rammohun Roy was closely associated with the Weekly *Sambad Kaumudi* which was started in December, 1821, and closed down in 1822. During this period of less than a year Rammohun regularly contributed articles to the paper but it was edited and published in the name, first of Bhāvanīcharan Dutt, and after May, 1822, of Govindachandra Konar. Thus it is not easy to understand how Rammohun may be regarded as the pioneer of Bengali Journals in whatever way we look at the matter.

It has been generally held that Rammohun Roy was the first Indian to write the Grammar of the Bengali language. His *Gaudiya Vyākaran*, written in English, was first published in 1826 and its Bengali version appeared in 1834. But the manuscript of a Bengali Grammar, written in Bengali and called *Bangla Bhasar Vyākaran*, has been recently discovered and edited (1970 A.D.) by T. P. Mukhopadhyay who has proved that it was composed between A.D. 1807 and 1811. He attributes its authorship to Mrityunjay Vidyalankar, though it cannot be regarded as absolutely certain. He regards Rammohun Ray's *Gaudiya Vyākaran* to be better in quality, but has the candour to admit that the credit, so long given to Rammohun, is really due to Mrityunjay Vidyalankar.^{23a} Similarly the claim that Rammohun Roy introduced Dhrupad in Bengal Music (Pravasi 1369, II. 631-32) has been found to be wrong.

Rammohun Roy has been hailed also as the "pioneer of social reform movements in India" and reference is made to his campaign against the *Sati*, the custom of burning a widow along with the dead husband, as the most important among them. But it is a fact, which cannot be, and has not been, disputed that the movement for the abolition of the *Sati* had begun before the birth of Rammohun. It is said that Rammohun was deeply touched by the sight of the immolation of his brother's wife and hence vigorously took up the cause. The story is almost certainly a later fabrication, but there is no denying the fact that Rammohun worked very hard to abolish this cruel practice, and deserves great credit for his efforts. Sri Ramananda Chatterjee admits that Rammohun was not the pioneer, but observes: "He [Rammohan] may or may not have been the central figure in that movement, but it must be admitted by all that but for his exertions that inhuman custom would not have been put down by law so soon as it was".²⁴

This statement illustrates how even eminent persons fall victims to the Rammohun myth. For the fact is that when the Governor-General Lord William Bentinck, dismayed at the failure of all steps taken so far to stop the cruel rite, at last took courage in both hands and decided to issue an Ordinance for abolishing it, Rammohun, when consulted by him, definitely opposed the idea of passing legislation to abolish it.²⁵ Much is also made of the fact that Rammohun published books to prove that the *Sati* is not enjoined in the Hindu *Sastras*. But it is forgotten that while the first tract of Rammohun against the *Sati* was published in 1818, Mrityunjay Vidyalankar, a Pandit of the Supreme Court, in 1817, recorded his views in his official capacity "which anticipated most of the arguments later advanced by Rammohun Ray."²⁶ Reference may be made in this connection to the letter written by Bentinck on 12 June, 1829, to Astell, the Chairman of the Board of Directors, East India Company. "There cannot be", he wrote, "a man more anxious for the abolition of that horrible rite than myself. I do not believe that among the most anxious advocates of that measure any one of them could feel more deeply than I do, the dreadful responsibility hanging over my happiness in this world and the next; if, as the Governor-General of India, I was to consent to the continuance of that practice for one minute longer. I determined therefore *before I came to India* that I would virtually take up the matter and that I would come to an early determination upon it."^{26a} This letter shows that Bentinck did not yield to anyone, including Rammohun Roy, in denouncing the *Sati* system; further that he had decided to abolish it even before he came to India and met Rammohun Roy. Thus it is quite clear that Bentinck was not inspired by Rammohun Roy and the latter was not the "guiding spirit" of the great humanitarian act as one of the devotees of Rammohun sought to prove in a letter to the *Statesman*, published in its issue (Calcutta) of 13 November, 1972. I sent a rejoinder to it in which I quoted the above letter of Bentinck. But it was not published in the *Statesman*.

Social reforms in the Hindu Society must be regarded as one of the special characteristics of the Modern Age, but far from being a pioneer, Rammohun's name is not associated with any social reform, if we except the agitation against 'Sati' which is more a humanitarian work than a social reform. Sri Ramananda Chatterji, who has devoted a special section to social reform in his short article on 'Rammohun Ray and Modern India', has justly laid stress on the 'condition of women and the evils of the caste system' as the crying evils of the Hindu Society calling for reform, and has referred to Rammohun's writings condemning both. But no active steps or concrete measure of reform regarding either of these by Rammohun has been pointed out so far by those who have harped on the theme of the great social reforms of

Rammohun from various platforms during the recent celebrations. Rammohun wrote in sympathetic terms about the condition of the Hindu widows, advocated women's education and urged the restoration of legal rights of women according to Hindu scriptures. Mere expressions of opinion, however sincere, are not equivalent to reform, but in the case of Rammohun the situation is far worse. He was definitely opposed to any change in the current social customs. Thus he condemned remarriage of Hindu widows because this custom was forbidden among all classes. He defended the existing social rules and usages about marriage system, forbidden food, etc. on the ground that in these matters people must follow the injunctions of the Sastras, including the Tantric texts which he regarded as of equal authority with the orthodox Hindu scriptures like the Vedas and Smritis.²⁷ As regards the caste system Ramananda Babu has quoted some passages from Rammohun's writings condemning its evils, but has forgotten to add that far from making any effort to remove them, Rammohun strictly followed all the rules of caste and even his great friend and co-worker, Mr. Adam, was constrained to admit it. Thus Adam writes on 24 June, 1827 : "All the rules in the present state of Hindu society he finds it necessary to observe, relate to eating and drinking. He must not eat of the food forbidden to Brahmins nor with persons of a different religion from the Hindu or of different caste or tribe from his own."²⁸ This is confirmed by the fact that during his voyage to England he took with him servants and foodstuffs and ate his meals in his own cabin and not in the common dining room.²⁹ It is well known that he kept the sacred thread, the distinctive mark of a Brahmin, on his body till his death at Bristol. Whatever we might think of this habit and attitude, it was certainly not the way to inaugurate the 'Modern Age' in India, and makes the epithet 'pioneer of social reform' almost a mockery.

Reference has been made above to the failure of the religious reform of Rammohun to make any impression on the Hindu society at large, and his social reform, excepting the agitation against the Sati system, was practically nil, if not worse, from the point of view of the regeneration of Hindu society which marks the New Age in Bengal.

Finally we may consider his contribution to the political regeneration of India. The name of Rammohun Roy will ever be remembered for his vigorous agitation against the Press Ordinance of 1823 which inflicted a great blow upon the freedom of the Press in India, and the Jury Act of 1827 which imposed an unjust and humiliating brand of inferiority on the Hindus and Muslims. The bold and dignified petition he wrote against the curtailment of the liberty of the Press was couched in a language which elicited the praise of even Englishmen, and one of them went so far as to compare it with the *Areopagitica*. Such a protest

against the British Government in India was never made before ; it set an example to the Indians of what came to be known as constitutional agitation and became a regular and recognised mode of political agitation in India for many years. But in considering his claim to inaugurate the Modern Age in India from the political point of view, we must take into consideration the following undisputed facts.

The most distinguished trait in Rammohun's political life was his love of liberty which was cosmopolitan in character and not restricted to any particular country or people. His jubilation on the liberation of the Spanish Colonies in South America and dismay at the prospect of the rejection of the Reform Bill of 1832 in the British Parliament are clear examples of such a spirit of universal outlook on humanity at large which was perhaps unknown and certainly very rare in those days, and all praise is due to him for his breadth of liberal views.³⁰ But it was not this spirit of internationalism but nationalism and ardent desire for political freedom which characterised the Modern Age in India, until at least very recent times. Rammohun is not known to have ever expressed any hankering after freedom of his own country from foreign yoke, such as we find in his contemporary Derozio and his pupils of the Hindu College—a new spirit of patriotism which grew from year to year throughout the 19th century and may justly be regarded as the most characteristic feature of the Modern Age in India. On the other hand, Rammohun welcomed many more years of English domination in India. This may appear incredible to many devoted followers of Rammohun, and so I quote his views, expressed to his friend Victor Jacquemont and recorded by him in his Journal: "National independence is not an absolute good.....Is not this fiery love of national independence a chimera?.....India requires many more years of English domination."³¹ A recent writer, after quoting the long passage from which this is an extract, has justly remarked: "Rammohun's 'love of freedom was unfortunately wedded to the theory of colonization of India by Europeans.....The theory of colonization was nothing but an explicit declaration of subservience to British rule. His political hedonism did not recognize any contradiction between love of freedom in the abstract and playing a subservient role to Europeans in practice.'"³² This very writer, however, begins his study of Rammohun with the remark that he "symbolized in himself the inauguration of the modern era in India."³³ I find it very difficult to understand this and also to reconcile Rammohun's jubilation over the liberation of the Spanish Colonies in South America with his desire for "many more years of British Domination in India". My study of the history of India in the nineteenth century, with special reference to her struggle for freedom, has led me definitely to the

conclusion that whatever may be the justification for the views of Rammohun, as quoted above, one who holds them has no claim to be regarded as inaugurating the Modern Age in India as they are in direct conflict with, and almost diametrically opposed to, the spirit that created Modern India and led to the achievement of independence. To Derozio and his pupils, and not to Rammohun, belongs the credit of inculcating patriotic, anti-British national ideas which found its most beautiful poetical expression in Bengali poetry for a century after the death of Rammohun and may be regarded as the most distinctive and characteristic feature of Modern India which has no parallel in the known history of India during the last three thousand years, but does not seem to have ever stirred the heart of Rammohun Roy.

It would appear from what has been said above that there is little justification for the claim put forward by eminent persons like Rabindranath Tagore, Ramananda Chatterjee and many others of less renown that Rammohun inaugurated the Modern Age in India. Indeed there was one element in Rammohun's character which made him unfit for playing such a role. This was his profound contempt for the idolatrous Hindus who formed more than eighty per cent of India's population, and it was expressed in language which a Christian missionary of those days could hardly excel. The following passage occurring in his reply to an adversary of his religious views would serve as an example : The Hindus, he wrote, "have subjected themselves to disgrace and ridicule by the worship of idols, very often under the most shameful forms, accompanied with the foulest language, and most indecent hymns and gestures."³⁴ His special animus against the Hindus is further proved by the fact that while he condemned their idolatry in such foul language he was a supporter of the Tantric cult, and, so far as I know, never uttered a word of reproach against its theories and practices which, in the opinion of the great Oriental scholar of the 19th century, Dr. Rajendralal Mitra, "are at once the most revolting and horrible that human depravity could think of."³⁵ A British missionary wrote a book on the Hindus during the lifetime of Rammohun Roy, but, while quoting an eye-witness's account of the normal rituals of the Tantriks, omitted certain passages as being too indecent.³⁶

There is no doubt that the religious reform of the Hindus, which may be regarded as the chief mission of Rammohun, was an utter failure. His views did not touch even a fringe of the Hindu society, and even after two centuries not even .00001 per cent of the Hindus have given up idolatry. This is no mere accident. The idolatrous Hindus, who survived the fanatic iconoclastic fury of the Muslim rulers for five hundred years and scurrilous abuses of their gods and goddesses by the Muslim Mullahs and the Christian missionaries, were not likely to be affected by similar abuses of Rammohun, even though he called

himself a Hindu and quoted Hindu scriptures in his support. In any case the fact remains that in spite of the best efforts of Rammohun Roy to the contrary, the New Age or Modern Age in India is based on the acceptance and toleration of idolatry, and not on its vile condemnation, not to speak of abolition, of which Rammohun was the High Priest. To regard him as the inaugurator of the Modern Age in a country or society in which religion plays the dominant role in the life and culture of the people seems to be altogether out of the question.

But though Rammohun did not inaugurate a New Age, no one can possibly dispute his claim to be regarded as a great personality of India in the 19th century. He possessed, to a high degree, many qualities of head and heart which are rarely found combined in a single individual, and some of which undoubtedly contributed to the Renaissance in Bengal in the 19th century. A spirit of rational, as opposed to traditional, approach to religious doctrines and literature; love of liberty which transcended geographical boundaries and embraced humanity at large such as was never witnessed before, at least in India, if not in the whole world; high appreciation of the value and cultural potentialities of English education at a time when the recognition of its cultural value was limited to a narrow circle, and a spirited remonstrance against the Government policy of encouraging the study of Sanskrit and Arabic rather than English; important contribution to the development of Bengali prose and Journalism in Bengali and Persian which were at a nascent stage; heroic fight for the freedom of the press; earnest efforts to improve the system of administration made both in India and England; knowledge of a number of foreign languages not possessed by any Indian before, and probably after, him; the humanitarian spirit which, in spite of his innate conservatism in social matters and reluctance to remove social evils by legislation, led him to exert himself to the utmost for suppressing the cruel rite of Sati, and continue his efforts by supporting the legislation, though passed against his will, in the face of the strong opposition of the orthodox Hindus who tried to nullify it; all these mark him out as a conspicuous figure of 19th century India. We should also pay tribute to him for his wide knowledge of, and keen interest in, the history of contemporary Europe and America in which few Indians, if any at all, were interested at the time, and remember with gratitude that the high appreciation and great honour which he received in England and France on account of his intellectual eminence and liberal international outlook, also, indirectly, brought honour to India which had no parallel before his time. It must also be admitted that though his religious views did not produce any impression upon the people at large, the influence it exerted upon a very small section had very salutary effect upon the future generations of Indians. In short, it may be said without any hesitation that though

Rammohun Roy did not *inaugurate* the Modern Age, he was undoubtedly one of its best and noblest representatives in many ways, and raised the prestige of Indian culture in the estimation of the outside world such as no one had done before him. But in this respect, also, a highly exaggerated notion prevails among the devotees of Rammohun about the attitude of Englishmen towards him. This would be evident from the following passage in a letter written by Peter Auber, Secretary to the East India Company, to Bentinck on 4 June, 1831 : "Rammohun Roy..is a staunch reformer—he is made much of by the party. I really think he is a mild well-meaning man of extraordinary acquirements *for a Hindoo* but not of much strength of mind." Again in his letter of 7 July, 1831, Auber wrote to Bentinck : "Rammohun Roy is one of the lions if not the lion of the day. *It is astounding what attracts John Bull* whose admiration is divided between the Prince as Rammohun Roy is called and Paganini the celebrated violin player."³⁷

It is obvious from the words italicised by me in the above extracts that the high praise bestowed upon Rammohun is due, at least partly, to the very poor opinion of the Hindus entertained by contemporary Englishmen. In a book written in 1792 Charles Grant described the Bengalis as inferior to the most backward classes in Europe. The Marquess of Hastings, the Governor-General, wrote in his Diary on 2 October, 1813 : "The Hindoo appears a being nearly limited to mere animal functions, and even in them indifferent. ...Such a people can at no period have been more advanced in civil policy." Both these views³⁸ were expressed during the lifetime of Rammohun Roy. The encomiums bestowed upon him by contemporary Englishmen must have been considerably influenced by the very wide difference between the actual accomplishments of Rammohun and what they normally expected from a Hindu. This element cannot be altogether ignored in forming a proper estimate of the value of contemporary European opinions about Rammohun Roy.

REFERENCES

- The following abbreviations have been used in these references :—
- Banerji—Brajendra Nath Banerji, *Rammohan Roy* (in Bengali), Sahitya Parishad, Calcutta. 1942.
- Colet—Sophia Dobson Colet, *The Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy*. Edited by D. K. Biswas and P. C. Ganguli, 1962.
- Centenary Booklet—*Rammohun Roy, The Man and His Work*. Centenary. Publicity Booklet—No. 1, Edited by Amal Home, 1933.
- Majumdar—*On Rammohun Roy*, by R. C. Majumdar, Asiatic Society, Calcutta. 1972.

Poddar—Arabinda Poddar, *Renaissance in Bengal—Quest and Confrontations, 1800—1860*. Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, 1970.

SBS—Sambadpatre Banglar Samajchitra (in Bengali) by Binoy Ghosh.

SSK—Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha (in Bengali) by Brajendra Nath Banerji (Second edition).

1. *Centenary Booklet*, p. 120.
2. *SSK*, II. 491.
3. *SBS*, II. 311.
4. Nagendranath Chattopadhyay, *Biography of Rammohun Roy* (in Bengali,) 3rd Edition, pp. 317-321.
5. *Rabindra Rachanavali* (in Bengali), IV. 513-19.
6. *Centenary Booklet*, p. 3.
7. Majumdar.
8. *Prachin Bangla Patra Samkalan* (in Bengali) by Dr. S. N. Sen, Calcutta University, pp. 50-51. This letter proves that Rammohan settled in Calcutta, after retirement, towards the end of 1815 and not in 1814 as is generally supposed.
9. For Rammohun's employment, cf. Banerji, pp. 31-2.
- 9(a) Banerji, pp. 15-16. But there is a view, based on Rammohun's own statement, that he did not inherit any portion of his father's property. *Centenary Booklet*, p. 34.
10. Banerji, p. 22.
11. For details, cf. *Ibid*, pp. 35-6.
12. *Ibid*, p. 37.
- 12(a) Specially, if he did not inherit his paternal Estate (cf. f-n. 9a)
13. *Ibid*, p. 32.
14. *Ibid*.
15. *Ibid*, p. 31.
16. This view gains additional strength if we accept, as true, the various sources of income of Rammohan mentioned above, particularly that he acted as *Banian* even after he had settled down in Calcutta.
17. Banerji, p. 35. But cf. foot-note 8 above,
18. Banerji, pp. 81-112. A more comprehensive list is compiled in the *Centenary Booklet*, pp. 133-151.
19. The total number of the Brahmos in West Bengal according to the *Census Report of India*, 1971, was only 251. Even the three branches of the Brahmos in Bengal to-day, mentioned above, do not constitute a homogeneous or allied unit. For example, the memorial meeting of Rammohun in 1285 (B.S.), organized by the *Sadharan Brahma Samaj*, was boycotted by the *Bharat-varshiya Samaj* (*SBS*, IV. p. 606). Again, Krishnakumar Mitra refused to perform his marriage with the daughter of Rajnarain Bose, according to the rites of the *Adi Brahma Samaj*. So

the marriage was celebrated according to the rites of the *Sadharan Brahma Samaj*, but the members of the *Adi Brahma Samaj*, including the father of the bride, did not attend the ceremony. (*SBS*, II. pp. 600-01).

20. cf. footnote 5.
21. Majumdar, pp. 20-39.
22. Ibid. Appendix, where passages from the works of the different authors mentioned above have been quoted.
- 22(a) *History of Bengali Literature*, p. 182.
- 22(b) *Mrityunjay Vidyalkar* (Sahitya Parisad, Calcutta), p. 7.
23. *Dictionary in English and Bengalee*, Introduction, p. 14. *Asiatic Journal*, 1835, Part I, pp. 43-44, 234.
- 23(a) *Bangla Bhasar Vyakaran* (in Bengali), edited by Tarapada Mukhopadhyaya and published by the Calcutta University (pp. 21—26).
24. *Centenary Booklet*, p. 73.
25. This was written by Bentinck himself in his Minute on the abolition of the *Sati* rite.
26. This is admitted by Dr. N. S. Bose, though he says that "it was mainly owing to his [Rammohan's] leadership that *Sati* was ultimately abolished" (Dr. N. S. Bose, *The Indian Awakening and Bengal*, 2nd. edition, pp. 171, 173.).
- 26(a) *Indian Archives*, Vol. XVI. p. 18.
27. The relevant passages are quoted in Majumdar, p. 41.
28. Colet, p. 212.
29. *SSK*, II, 476-7.
30. *Centenary Booklet*, p. 27. Poddar, pp. 58-60.
31. Poddar, pp. 61-2.
32. Ibid, p. 61.
33. Ibid, p. 47.
34. Ibid, p. 70.
35. R. Mitra, *Sanskrtt Buddhist Literature of Nepal*, Calcutta, p. 261.
36. Ward, W., *A View of the History, Literature and Mythology of the Hindoos*, Serampore, 1818.
37. *Indian Archives*, Vol. XVI, p. 22.
38. For these and other similar views, cf. R. C. Majumdar, *Glimpses of Bengal in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 8-9.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE PROBLEMS OF ARRANGEMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL SPECIMEN IN MUSEUMS

DILIP KUMAR RAY

The growth of collection is perhaps the first and foremost concern of a museum of any category but second in importance and not so far at that, is the obligation of presenting the objects in the rightful manner to its visitors.

An exhibition can be taken as pedagogically successful if its purpose is served with accuracy of meaning, with reasonable time and without undue difficulty on the part of the general museum visitors and serious students. Specimens of anthropology having bearing on physical, prehistoric and cultural aspects of man, arranged in cases or within exhibition halls, are to be presented in a manner that would impart to the visitors the implicate and comprehensive value of the exhibition as well as stimulate their thoughts and feelings.

In those days of European Renaissance the Western World cherished a parochial and regrettable knowledge of the cultures of other continents. The 19th Century humanistic ideals were too much preoccupied with the Classical and Greco-Roman view of aesthetic considerations. The great civilisations of Asia, Africa and South America were generally looked down as primitive and grotesque and their aesthetic order were classified as cultural curiosities. Consequently it was found that objects of unquestionable ethnological value were lumped together with less articulate specimens. During the reform period between the two global wars, however, this orthodox egocentric attitude yielded place for a new outlook which brought forth with it a new kind of arrangement and display akin to museum ideals. Especially, during the thirties and forties, new needs had evolved out of the changes in the society and as such museums had to attune themselves with the motto of 'three Es'—Entertain, Educate and Enrich' with particular emphasis on mass education. The age-old methods of display, where decorative arrangement was the guiding principle and where exhibits treated as a part of the design, were replaced by thoughtful, scientific and educative treatment. Presently, the displayed objects are pointers to this changed attitude to the intellectual, spiritual and manual skill of the human race.

The planning of the ethnology galleries, in particular, offers some intricacies and at the same time offers some opportunities which are supposed to be unique and are not met with other types of collections. The specimen of ethnology cover a wide range of size, shape, colour,

texture, etc., which are potent with immense scope to evolve variety in exhibition to avoid monotony, if, of course, scientifically arranged and displayed. Moreover, ethnology being study of Man in his totality has a ready and immediate draw for the visitors. Having such an intimate human touch in it, it has become more pertinent on the part of the museum personnel to be more cautious in selecting, arranging and displaying ethnological objects for the very human visitors.

The discipline of anthropology is so vast and comprehensive as it embraces the consideration of so many distinct factors and phenomena, that the classification of museum objects poses a jig-shaw puzzle for an worthwhile display in keeping with the scope and financial feasibility of the museum concerned. An ethnology museum, as for example, to illustrate a theme such as "Influence of environment upon Man's physique and culture", would be imparting a very useful lesson in human bionomics. Likewise, "Man's place among the Primates", or "From virus to Man" will throw light on the evolutionary trend towards Man; "From digging stick to tractor" or "From tree-log to spoked-wheel" will enunciate the developmental history of agriculture or transport as the case may be. These thematic displays can be treated either 'in extenso' or very concisely, according to circumstances but in either case education to be punched with visual entertainment.

In planning an exhibition on ethnology and to create an accurate impression and considering the fact that ethnology museum have a great task towards the betterment of the human society, the planner or designer will need so close supervision from the experts of the discipline that the curator might as well do the job himself. It is always expected to present the public fewer exhibits—well arranged and properly displayed. To attain a purposeful display much care should be lavished upon the selection of objects so that it is at par with the theme of the display. But, often, to our dismay, specimens are unintelligibly sought out to end up eventually to an assemblage of irrelevant and isolated objects incoherent to the theme of the exhibition. When there is dearth of adequate space and when a complete set of exhibits are not handy, it is wise to refer to certain important questions by means of documents, charts, maps, sketches, photographs, models, etc. than merely to present a few disarrayed specimens which will fail to cater the goods to the visitor to formulate a complete picture. No doubt, a cross-section of a people or tribe in terms of their racial history, material and social culture, if possibly be displayed will be a 'happy accident' for any museum curator. But the materials available or can be availed of will rarely be so comprehensive as to bring it within the feasibility. Even if a near all-embracing collection is a practical proposition the exhibition space will seldom offer enough room to accomodate the range of variation of each category of object, say, for instance, the material

culture of the 'Savara' or "Angami Naga" tribe. This completeness, indeed, will be more appreciated by the students of the discipline rather than the unclassified mass of visitors.

The fundamental urge of all human communities are food, shelter, clothings, fire, container, essential tools and weapons but often, it is noticed, that objects of less fundamental character such as objects of personal adornments, arts, or more grotesque and gruesome specimens related to head-hunting, sacrifice, magic, etc. find their way for an enviable attention and provided with more space than the common objects of everyday use and other cultural objects which are more significant anthropologically. Of course, to some communities the practice of head-hunting or sacrifice is a part of the magico-religious practice or regarded as the 'culture-focus', disintegration of which from the life of the people is disastrous for them. So, it depends to a great extent to the discretion of the museum personnel to select objects for a display for their importance in the culture of a people, including both 'sacred' and 'profane' aspects, rather than their mastery in the galleries.

The more numerous and sizable the collection the more it is difficult to select specimen for an exhibition. Often, it poses a ticklish problem to reject one specimen to incorporate another, particularly, to make a choice between a comparatively new and well presented specimen and an old dilapidated one or in between a recent scientifically documented specimen and an undocumented deteriorated one. Moreover, if the value of the specimen are to be measured against the quantity and exactitude of information accompanying them, it will be found that many of the early collections will rank low in the scientific scale. Nevertheless, these collections must not go unheeded for as many of them represent the cultural standard of their time and are of indispensable value for a comparative study as well as for dischronic study of the respective cultures.

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Lack of adequate space can be another unwieldy factor for presenting a balanced exhibition when sufficient collections are available. One of the various ways of attacking this problem is to expose the visitors to a vista of different aspects of culture of different people within a broad geo-ethnic zone. For an instance, in Chotanagpur area of Eastern India, Santals, Oraons, Mundas, Hos, Kurmis, etc. live adjacent to one another and they share many cultural traits in common while differing in some other traits. They practice the same type of agricultural method; they have almost the identical settlement pattern; they discharge nearly the same religious and ritual performance and so on. Now, to present a balanced and well attained exhibition on the tribal culture within the spatial expanse, without unduly emphasizing the culture of an individual tribe, the methods of cultivation and agricultural implements of the Santals; habitation and household utensils of the Oraons; hunting and fishing of

the Mundas ; magico-religious practices of the Hos etc. can be singled out to throw a revealing light on the comprehensiveness of the total cultural aspects of a Geo-ethnic group. Very few museums, despite their myriad and voluminous collections, can well afford to make room for a comprehensive display covering each aspect of the culture of each individual tribe within a geographical area.

Actual arrangement of specimen :

The arrangement of anthropological exhibition call for great deal of concentration and thought. There is no single curriculum of arranging method. The curator might arrange the exhibition in as many ways as possible and consequently only the best and effective one is to be followed in future exhibition. Every aspect of mankind, primitive or advanced, from prehistoric days to modern age, may be conveniently ramified into three main broad sections namely : (a) Physical and racial section, (b) Pre-history section and (c) Social and cultural section

The physical anthropology mainly confines itself to the study of human evolution, human variation, human biology, human genetics etc. This section of anthropology till to this day is very regrettably neglected in the museums in India and not a single museum can boast of a well organised physical section. This branch of anthropology is imbued with great potentiality of shaping the mental outlook of the visitors about racial differentiations, evolution etc. It can enrich the visitors with the knowledge of basic physical characters of 'Mankind in the making' furnishing an account of the evolution of Primates and modern Man against the background of fundamental mechanisms of evolution and the history of the fishes, reptiles and mammals that preceded the hominid family which may be titled as 'From Protozoa to Man' as suggested by Elma Wittlin. Then in another series and it may be shown that how such anatomical features as the human skull, teeth, and jaw-bones have developed and their difference in apes and other primates. The existing races of mankind with their physical characteristics may be exhibited. In arranging the above mentioned series of exhibition it will not always be possible to have actual specimen. This hindrance can be done away with the aid of models, skeletons, pictures, charts etc.

Coming to prehistoric section we are often confronted with the dilemma of whether prehistory should be displayed in the archaeological sections as is practised usually by the archaeological museums in India or to find their 'niche' in Anthropology museum or section. But one cannot possibly deny the fact that prehistory is closely allied with anthropology. "The study of anthropology will be rootless without prehistory and the study of prehistory will be fruitless without anthropology," The prehistoric specimen offers a great deal of opportunity in arranging them for display. Some of these arrangements are discussed below.

*IN CULTURAL SEQUENCE OR ACCORDING TO
CHRONOLOGY**

**STEEL &
IRON**

} Variously sub-divided.

**BRONZE &
COPPER**

} Variously sub-divided.

Neolithic or
New Stone Age

} Subdivisible into a number of
cultures.

Mesolithic

} Subdivisible into a number of
cultures.

**PALAEOLITHIC
or
OLD STONE AGE**

Upper
Palaeolithic

{ Magdalenian
Solutrean
Aurignacian

Middle
Palaeolithic

{ Mousterian

Lower
Palaeolithic

{ Levalloisian
Clactonian
Acheulean
or
Abbevillian

EOLITHIC

* After M. C. Burkitt.

TYPOLOGICAL DIVISION

IRON AGE	{	Bar-celts, dagger blade.
BRONZE AGE	{	Axe-heads, Chisels, Daggers, Knives, Sickles, Spear-heads, Sword, palstaves etc.
	{	NEOLITHIC { CELTS, HAMMER-AXE, Or { CHISELS, ARROW-HEAD, NEW STONE { SICKLES, DAGGER, SPEAR-HEAD, AGE { RING-STONE etc.
	{	MESOLITHIC—MICROLITHS
STONE AGE	{	UPPER { Andi-knife blade, PALAEO- { Chatel perron knife, LITHIC { blade, Lanceport, Keeled-scraper, Gra- vette knife-blade, Fonte Robert point, Laurel and Willow- leaf Lence points, and bone tools.
	{	PALAEO- { LITHIC { Or { OLD STONE { MIDDLE AGE { PALAEO- { Side-scrapers, points LITHIC { and Dises.
	{	LOWER { Coup-de-poing, Awls, PALAEO- { Choppers, Clactonian LITHIC { Flakes, and Leval- loisian Flakes.

After arranging the specimen in the above order, they can be displayed in a number of continuous show-cases, pedestal or table cases, as for example, if the eolithic specimen are displayed in the first case, then in the next the lower Palaeolithic Abbevillian tools are shown and in the third Lower Palaeolithic Achulian tools are placed and so on. Each display-case will accompany a thumb-nail exordium containing the salient features about the culture, technology of the tools, flora, fauna and ecology of that particular period. This type of continuous show-case display with proper labels will enable the visitors to carry on the impression of the previous show-case to the next one and so forth and they can easily grasp the significance inherent in them.

Prehistoric pottery, art, cave painting, engraving can be incorporated into the exhibition as an added colourful attraction. In exhibiting primitive art and art objects there arises a lot of controversy whether they would be treated as separate art objects or will be exhibited against the culture-context. In the United States, some museum curators of art

museums are found to be enticed by the charm of primitive art and to cite an example, in Chicago, where it is noticed that the Chicago Art Institute is acquiring primitive art with a missionary zeal even when there is already a stupendously fine collection in the Chicago Natural History Museum. But it must not escape our attention that the primitive art, on the contrary of modern art, is more akin to the religious painting of the Renaissance. The primitive artists are subordinate to their culture and always abide by the tradition. Mr. Harry L. Shapiro, Chairman, Department of Anthropology of the Natural History Museum, New York, has rightly said, ".....They (he means museum staff) by virtue of training and collections, present primitive art in relation to the culture of which it is an expression. The dependence of primitive art on its particular culture is an essential aspect of its very nature, and to sever them completely is to distort the nature of the art."

In the previous paragraphs, the question of arrangement of physical and prehistory sections of anthropology museum is discussed to some extent. It has been tried in the foregoing paragraphs to delineate the problem of arrangement of the ethnological objects in museums.

The following are some of the guide lines which can be followed in a museum taking into consideration its scope, nature of collection, cross-section of the clientele it serves, etc.

1. *In order of composing materials :*

On the basis of the materials of which the specimens are made of a systematic classification may be pursued. Objects made of identical material can be enlisted in one section or in a place. All objects made of organic materials, namely, (a) Wood, bamboo, reed, (b) fabrics and textiles, (c) leather, skin and skin products, and (d) bone, ivory and antler, are to be placed in a group. Likewise all silicious materials including (a) stone, (b) fossil, (c) glass, porcelain and (d) terra-cotta can be displayed in one section and all metallic object of (a) Gold, (b) Silver, (c) Copper and its alloys, (d) Tin, (e) Lead and (f) Iron are to be grouped together for display.

But it poses some problems in arranging objects in this order as one kind of material may be utilised for making different and distinct types of objects which should not preferably be displayed in a single group. This kind of arrangement is quite likely to lead to a confusing assemblage of objects such as some domestic utensils, a few ritual objects and a number of weapons will be classed together under the same group heading.

2. *In order of evolution :*

In this method of arrangement the specimen are classified in order of their gradual development i.e., in order of advancement of technological process from a simple to a complex one so as to focuss the process of

development or evolution. A mere glance at this type of arrangement will enlighten the visitors to the fact that all modern technological objects have a prolonged past history behind them. The digging stick may be displayed as the initial evolutionary stage of modern plough. Then in the second stage the digging stick is provided with a foot rest, Then some of the digging sticks are found to be best suggesting a hoe, then in the final stage of development it is provided with a handle and its former handle transformed into a beam to form a plough. By similar method of arrangements, the dwelling places can be shown in successive stages of development from natural shelters like cave, lawtos to constructed hut and eventually into houses and buildings. Likewise, it can be relayed by exhibition how cylindrical log of work gradually changed to block-wheel and eventually to spoked wheel thence to rubber-tyre etc.

It must not be minimized that there is also some difficulty in persuading this arrangement. It is must likely to be practically impersuade to trace the evolution of the technological processes of material culture typologically not to speak of the inadequacy of necessary specimen to follow up each and every step of evolution.

3. *In order of ethnic group or tribe :*

Here objects concerning individual tribe are displayed in separate group—which may include the household utensils, weapons of war, agricultural implements, dress and ornaments, musical instruments, ritual objects etc. Individual alcoves or small rooms may be provided for each tribe. As for example, two rows of small rooms are made on both sides of a central pathway in a big exhibition hall and each room contains the objects of a particular tribe.

A comprehensive study of the culture of different tribes can be made in such an arrangement. Moreover, a visitor interested in a particular tribe may find it most convenient and will not have to cover the whole length of exhibition. Again when a museum undertakes an expedition in less explored place it may display the collected specimen through the expedition in a separate room and will readily attract fresh visitors.

This method of arrangement is also not full-proof and have its own problem. It is not always tenable to have a comprehensive collections from each tribe represented in the exhibition ; some tribes will be found to be provided with an excellent collections while others will show up deplorably in this respect. This will create an unhappy impression of the culture of the representing tribes.

4. *In order of functional aspects of material culture :*

In this method of arrangement the specimens which are identical in function are grouped together e.g. objective implements which are employed for agricultural operation are to be displayed in one group and

appliances which are used for fishing pursuits are placed in another group and objects concerning rituals in the next and so on.

In the university or the college museums this type of arrangement may be resourceful to the students. All the basketry types in a place, say for example, will be a ready-reckoner for them to easily learn about various types of baskets, their uses, materials used, techniques employed for weaving them, decorations on them and distributions. A few of the important sections under this type of arrangement are detailed below :

(i) *Habitation* : All types of hut and dwelling places, both natural and constructed, are included in this section. Models or other visual aids as well as actual specimen when feasible of cave-dwellings, pile-dwellings, tents, huts of different types—round, rectangular, barrel-shaped, beehive type, quadrilateral, conical, etc. can be grouped together in a single section.

(ii) *Hunting appliances* : This section includes all the implements and weapons used for hunting. It will naturally contain traps, cages, nets, spears, harpoons, bow and arrow, boomerang, sling, throwing stick, clubs, sword, etc.

(iii) *Fishing appliances* : It will cover traps of various kinds, nets, fish-hooks, harpoons, baskets, lines, spears, bow and arrow etc.

(iv) *Agricultural implements* : Instruments and appliances used in agriculture are grouped together. Digging stick, planting stick, hoe, spade, scraper, sickle, scythe, threshing implements, mower, husking lever, plough, etc. are enlisted in this group.

(v) *Fire-making* : Different kinds of fire-making instruments with their methods can be displayed in this section.

(vi) *Domestic utensils* : All kinds of household goods like vessels, pots, containers, laddle, spoon, household furniture etc. are to be displayed in this section.

(vii) *Dress and ornaments* : This category includes various kinds of dresses and ornaments generally used by the primitive tribes as well as the contemporary people, men and women, could be displayed by means of models against a large geographical map showing their location or by wire-silhouettes. The dresses again could be subdivided into ordinary, commercial, ceremonial, occupational dresses etc.

(viii) *Basketry* : Baskets of various kinds and of different techniques are grouped giving full illustrations of their techniques, uses, distribution etc.

(ix) *Ritual objects* : All the magico-religious paraphernalia can be arranged with adequate mural aids as background will make an interesting section.

(x) *Musical instruments* : In this section various kinds of musical instruments, used by different people, are to be displayed. The musical

instruments can be conveniently divided into three groups, namely, (a) percussion instrument, (b) stringed instrument, and (c) wind instrument.

(xi) *Defensive and offensive appliances*: This category will include myriad kinds of weapons. It may be further subdivided into two groups—in one group the weapons of offence and in another—weapons of defence are to be grouped. Clubs, maces, axes, spears, knives, daggers, bows and arrows, etc. fall under the subsection of offensive weapons while body-armours, helmets, shields, etc. are included in the subsection of defensive appliances. Of course, now-a-days, some of the offensive weapons like Fiji clubs, Naga spears, etc. are used for ceremonial purpose only.

(xii) *Transport*: This section can be organised for display by means of actual specimen, miniature models, photographs, sketches etc. It includes two sub-sections—One for land transport and the other for water transport. It may include conveyances—with wheel and without wheel, various kinds of rafts—like floats, balsa, dug-out canoe, out-rigger canoe, simple and complex boats etc.

5. *In order of Geo-ethnic sequence*:

Franz Boas, the renowned anthropologist first made an extensive study of the North American tribes and their culture on this basis. Many anthropology museums all over the world are following this geographical method combined with the tribal sequence for exhibiting specimens of ethnology. The basic feature that makes such an arrangement serviceable, valuable and instructive is that in this method of arrangement the culture of one particular group can be compared with that of another. Similarities and dissimilarities between different cultures in the respective geographical setting can also be easily demonstrated by this way.

There could be as many methods of arrangement as one could possibly execute. But till today it is generally overlooked to present a synthesis of cultures which are on display in a museum. The *Laterean Museum* in Rome may be taken as one of the exception in this respect, here a brief survey of certain major subjects, concentrated in a room which are visited at the end of the tour of the museum. The '*Muse' de l'homme*' in Paris has gone a further step by planning two different routes to be followed through the public galleries; the longer route is meant for displaying the analysis and the shorter route leads to a synthesis of a culture.

In conclusion it can be said as museology is not an exact science it is more dynamic and are potent with immense possibility. A renowned museologist once said that one need not be a crazy guy to become a successful curator but it helps a lot to be one. So, one could evolve or by chance

find out a new method of arrangement just as if a monkey playing with a typewriter may come out with a new word. Museologists should never feel satisfied with anything. Satisfaction brings complacency and complacency shuns new innovation. One has to be always dissatisfied so that he tries to improve himself in the next project. There is no such thing as 'last word' in museology. Imagination, sincerity with a dash of ingenuity on the part of the museum personnel can bring miracle.

Especially, in an anthropology museum at the rock bottom of all such efforts is the purpose to make it easier for the public to scale how civilisation attained the present form and how the people has contributed to the evolution of civilisation through the time and space. The new consciousness is that a museum must be a place of immense delight and loveliness, where everything is a joy to the eyes, and where instruction is imparted by the sheer beauty and intelligence of arrangement and display.

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CATALOGUING AND DOCUMENTATION OF MEDIAEVAL TEMPLES OF BENGAL : AN ANALYSIS OF PROBLEMS AND METHODS

TARAPADA SANTRA

Temples of Bengal remain traditionally unappreciated by scholars and art historians. Some of these temples were built during the early mediaeval times. In addition to this, Bengal is spotted with numerous temples erected between 17th Century and 19th Century. These temples are important in respect of their numbers and archaeological, historical and social factors. Many of these structures are in ruins or completely destroyed due to change of courses of rivers, earthquakes and erosion in an atmosphere noted for its salinity. Onslaught of repeated epidemics, famines and widespread attack of 'Burdwan Fever' or Malaria made many rural areas of Bengal deserted by the people and consequently many temples gradually came to be destroyed due to the absence of proper maintenance. During the last centuries of the mediaeval period which followed the Muslim conquest artists of Bengal erected with the help of different kinds of stone and terracotta embellishment examples of a class of architecture and sculpture which could be taken as having a typical character of its own. So far no attempt has been made to make a census or list of the extant temples remaining on two sides of the divided Bengal.

At the time of the first archaeological investigations the number of standing monuments were more in number. As a result, greater attention was given on the structures of the pré-Mughal date. At that time no decision was taken regarding an evaluation of the artistic achievement and the problem of preservation of Bengal temples. In 1873 one of the highly placed officers of the then Archaeological Department, Mr. J. D. Begler commented that the famous terracotta temples of Bishnupur in Bankura District of West Bengal do not deserve mention due to their comparatively recent origin. Art historians like Fergusson also looked down on these temples of Bengal. As a result of this contemptuous attitude temples erected after 15th Century A. D. came to be regarded as degraded and not worthy of scholarly attention.

It is a fact that many of the temples with their unique terracotta decoration on the both sides of Bengal have already taken the path of destruction. But other extant temples are not yet beyond the scope of proper repairs and conservation work. It is evident that during the

beginning of the 16th Century A. D. a kind of revival started in respect of temple building. This revival deeply influenced the architectural forms and terracotta embellishments and created a new wave of enthusiasm. The long run effect of this trend continued even at the beginning of the 20th century. These sculptural decorations used to serve temple architecture contained a kind of liveliness and force of character strengthened by its natural affinity to folk art. This element helped to separate these temples from the style and technique of Pala and Sena periods and make these worthy to be studied as examples of the folk traditions of Bengal.

The initial neglect and highbrowed disdain regarding these temples was replaced by an understanding of their importance and some of these temples came to be protected and maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India at a later period. The Bishnupur Temples of Bankura, the Baranagar temple in Murshidabad, the Guptipara temple in Hooghly, Mathurapur temple in Faridpur and Palpara temple in Nadia were protected in this manner from total destruction. It is a sad fact that we do not know the number of temples destroyed due to neglect. The author of this paper attempted to make a list of the extant temples of this nature which are facing imminent destruction. While doing this work, he came across many sites where common people drew his attention to the ruinous traces of many decayed temples.

In 1930, the well known scholar on the folk culture of Bengal, Sri Gurusaday Dutt engaged himself in the study of terracotta temples of Bengal with a proper enthusiasm. It is to be noted that many other temples described in the different local histories of Bengal are now disappeared without leaving any trace. It has also been seen that photographs contained in those local histories are now the only proof of their existence in the past.

A situation like this created problems for modern scholars who want to study the architectural and sculptural techniques of Bengal terracotta temples including the study of the contemporary social life as related to and depicted through temple decorations. The first question that comes to the mind in this regard is connected with the information regarding the nature of temple-donors, their professions and the source of their affluence. Whether these temples were built by local landholders or Zaminders or at a later period even by the merchant class not dependent on land and men who participated in their erection are questions which seem to be important but remain to be properly investigated and are generally unanswered.

Information regarding the architects, architectural techniques of construction and carving of plaques used in decoration and type of materials utilised in temples etc. are not correctly known to us. It has been observed that even in areas with easy availability of stone, terracotta architectural decorations are used by the artist-architects. But no inves-

tigation of the reason behind the construction of terracotta temples in stony areas or *vice-versa* is not properly investigated or studied.

Want of a competent catalogue or thorough documentation created various problems for the research scholars. Some of these scholars have recently observed that the artists responsible for creating terracotta decorations on temples completely disappeared about one hundred years ago. As an example the hundred-year old and completely undecorated Navaratna Temple of Dakshineswar of Rani Rashmani has been often cited. This conclusion is based presumably on the assumption that absence of sculptural decoration is an undeniable proof of the absence of living artists and a practising community of architects. This apparently unassailable conclusion has been altered by the initial work undertaken by the present author regarding compilation of a fully documented catalogue of Bengal temples. The information derived from his efforts is of quite different nature. The inscribed temples in various parts of Bengal have the year, date and the name and address of the architects. From this source we come to know that artists in terracotta carried on and continued this tradition even at the beginning of the 20th Century. It has been further observed from this source that Zaminders and landlords are not the only class who patronised the erection of temples. People who amassed considerable wealth due to their participation in or connection with indigo and silk plantations during the later periods widely took part as donors in the work of building temples in different parts of the country. Moreover, we come to know with the help of the names and addresses of the architects inscribed on temples their concentrations in different parts of the country. It also helps us to understand various area-wise concentration of artist-architects responsible for the rise of different localised styles of temple building.

The reasons stated above unmistakably underline the importance and need of documentation of Bengal temples. Taking into account the enormous importance of organised work, Ananda Niketan Kirtisala, a rural museum of Nabasan village in Howrah district chalked out a plan to start full-scale documentation work. With this end in view a plan was drawn up to prepare a card-index of temples in the different districts of West Bengal. For this work help of a honorary worker was found to be available but the question of meeting expenses on tours of temple-sites and the cost of photography etc. posed a difficult financial problem. Many appeals and applications were submitted and placed before the State and Central Government authorities. But these appeals failed to get any response. In this situation, Ananda Niketan Kirtisala took up the work of temple documentation without depending on others. It is encouraging that the efforts in this respect for noting down the cultural relics of the country met some help from interested scholars and other

broadminded gentlemen who helped this work by lending photographic instruments, etc.

The information collected for preparing the card index envisaged under this plan could be divided into two major parts. In one of these, the detailed account of the temple and related information is placed. The other part the work is related to the need of keeping photographic prints and negatives with accompanying and corresponding classification numbers. In the card index entries the following information are usually given :—

- (1) Date of inspection. (2) Name of District. (3) Name of Police station. (4) Name of mauza. (5) Name of village within a mauza. (6) Name of the area or locality. (7) Name of the temple and its descriptive account including : (a) Type of the temple *e.g.*, Charchālā, Atchālā, Dochālā or Ratna or Sikhara etc. (b) the name of the deity enshrined in the temple. *e.g.* Sridhara Jiu, Madan Gopal, Bhuteswar Siva, etc. (c) the directional orientation of the temple : information which is much required for proper photography of the temple-structures. This is important because a temple facing west should be visited in the afternoon for proper photography, while temples facing east require the taking of photograph in the forenoon or morning (d) the material used in the temple bricks or stone, etc. (e) whether there is any sculptural decoration or not—whether the decoration is in stone or terracotta (f) the length, breadth and the height of the temple. (g) the architectural method of laying the roof of the temple, *i.e.* flat roof, dome, half-vaulted structure or corbelled roof structure, etc. (8) The description of the icon *i.e.* whether it is linga, Sālagrāma or the image of any other god including the material of the object of worship and an information whether the rites of worship are regularly performed or not. (9) An account of the temple-donor and his caste, title and profession (10) Name of the architect which is sometimes given on the inscribed slabs. (11) Date of erection and/or inscribed plaque. (12) any special information *i.e.* whether there are any temple-doors with designs and examples of wood carvings, the existence of any mithuna plaque or any sign of information related to the erection of the temple. (13) Printed account regarding the temple published in books and journals.

Now the left side of the card is utilised for pasting a contact-print of the temple-photograph. Below this contact-print on the right the negative number and the accession number are noted down in red ink. A separate register is maintained for noting down information regarding accession number of the negative and the related description.

In the accession register the following information are available :

- (1) the accession number is divided into three units. The first two

digits refer to the year of collection. The value of the second digital unit correspond to the serial number of each collection during the year. The third part of the unit is a component part of the second unit. For example, let us take the case of Shiddheswari temple of Baital village in Bankura District which has got three photographs taken in 1971. So the respective number for these photographs would be 71· 21· 1, 71· 21· 2 and 71· 21· 3 etc. (2) the date of accession (3) name of district, police station and village where the photograph was taken (4) description of the subject, matter of the photograph i.e. if it is a temple, masjid, inscription or palatial structure etc. (5) description of the subject-matter of the photograph (6) name of the photographer (7) date of photography (8) position of the negative in the museum (a) registration and classification number (b) cabinet and shelf number (9) information of print and enlargements (a) volume and part number of the album (b) page number of the album.

After the accession number of the negative, the catalogue number or call number is given. With the help of this number negatives are found out. This number is divided according to the districts. For this purpose a particular digital number is given to the individual districts of West Bengal. This number is composed of two parts, viz., the number of district and the serial number divided by a point in between. Let us suppose that the catalogue number of the negative is 14.25. It means that it is the 25th negative of district number 14 meaning Jalpaiguri.

After the line of the catalogue number of the negative information regarding the placing of negative in the museum is given. This part of the card-index is noted down in pencil so that it could be changed whenever required. It is followed by information relating to enlargements in print and the volume, part and folio numbers of the album in which they are kept.

For protecting the negatives they are always wrapped with oil paper and placed in small envelopes pasted on two sides. They are kept in such a manner so that they could not come into contact of the gum used in the envelope. On the right hand corner of this envelope the accession number is noted down in Indian ink. The left side of the envelope is used for noting down the catalogue number. Finally, these negatives are arranged district-wise and placed inside metal containers.

CASTE AND SOCIAL HEIRARCHY : A POSSIBLE SYNTHETIC VIEW

K. MUKERJI

1. It is not quite certain whether the phenomenon of caste, as observed in India, is really an important and interesting proposition in a rigorous scientific sense. It is possible, even probable, that it is not. The fact that a great deal has been written about it and that in a manner which makes the phenomenon appear important, is by itself, not an adequate step towards establishing the hypothesis that it is an important analytical category that is helpful for the understanding of the structural pattern of the Indian society, as for that matter its internal power relations. In spite of all that has been written about it, the proposition that the phenomenon of caste could be a minor dependent variable rather than a major independent variable, has somehow escaped serious attention. Such a proposition, however, remains a distinct possibility. There is very little doubt that a great deal of actual social practices in any given situation are arbitrary in a causative sense. This should, of course, follow from the idea of a model to describe the essential explanatory sequence, a process that would be ruled out if every detail was of equal functional significance.

2. One of the interesting features, of the fairly extensive literature on caste, is that while Europeans in general, and Englishmen in particular, have always found it extremely fascinating; Indian scholars, who are more familiar with the details, have tended to devote much less importance to the institution. It is also generally agreed that in spite of the very great details into which such authors as Nesfield¹ or Hutton² had gone, they were obstructed in their investigations by some of their preconceived notions, and, in fact, their studies suffered as a result of their interest and fascination about the institution itself*. In other words, the principal difficulty in their very systematic and detailed studies have been that, on the whole, they tended to attach too much functional importance to the institution of caste. Partly as arising-out of their pre-conceived notions, they tended to attach too much structural and/or functional significance to the institution, and in doing so, they had tended to over-emphasize some specific functional aspects of the caste system. Thus, while Risley³, on the whole, over-played the tribal or racial domination elements⁴, Hutton, by and large, showed a certain amount of sympathy for the division of labour role, that must have been involved in the evolution of the caste system. As regards the empirical demolition of the racial domination theories of caste, the work of Mazumdar, Mahalonobis and Rao, for instance, must be considered important. It would, how-

ever, be enough to restrict the reference to Mazumdar's⁵ work alone, as Mahalanobis and Rao's work on generalized D^2 is a contribution to statistics rather than to social anthropology.

3. The principal difference between the European authors and their Indian counterparts has been that, on the whole, the Indian authors, while being much less rigorous or scientific, tended to give more attention to the Indian literature on caste, as compared to the existing social psychological caste phenomenon, as actually found in the field studies. It is undoubtedly true that some of the Indian authors like Datta⁶, shared with the European counterparts, certain pre-conceived notions like racial or tribal domination, as the basis of the emergence of the caste system. But even in this, they tended to rely more on the historical significance of the Indian literature on caste than on the anthropological and sociological field work materials. Their principal advantage, in following this method, if any, has to be found in their unconscious adherence to the social interpretation embodied in the works of the Indian law givers as actual participant observers of the caste system at work from time to time, without having to reconstruct the system on the basis of any abstract subjective hypothesis. There is no doubt that their works are, in general, very much poorer as pieces of social science investigations. But this very fact helped them to avoid some of the one-sided propositions and mistakes about what the caste system was obviously not. With the development of the subject, as it became more and more clear that none of the explanations would satisfactorily explain the caste system as it exists during the current period, the relative importance of the Indian studies based on the critical annotations of the works of the Indian law givers tended to become more and more important.

4. The recent trend in the literature and discussions on caste is interesting, not so much because it resolves the logical problems attached to the formation and survival of the caste system in a country like India, as revealed by the older crop of what may be called the classical studies, but because it takes a somewhat new turn in its approach. Though the position was not unknown in the earlier literature, the starting point of this new trend may be found in Srinivas's⁷ study of the Coorgi society. Apart from a wealth of details relating to the Coorgi society and its social practices, Srinivas's approach is novel, in so far as, it emphasises ritual purity as an element determining caste hierarchy. The Indian literature on caste is, of course, full of reference to ritual purity, but it does not take an anthropologically or sociologically meaningful view of ritual purity as such. Though Srinivas does not make it specifically clear, the interesting point about ritual purity as a dominant element in the determination of caste ordering is unique as a proposition, not because there is anything profound in the concept of ritual purity as an analytical concept, but because ritual purity and hierarchy based on it is, to say the least, a functional. Quite obviously this is in sharp contrast to the theories based on the

survival of older functional institutionalism of the Hutton or Blunt type; or such others who tend to deduce a kind of frozen functionalism to the concept of ritual purity itself.

5. The interesting point relates primarily to the acceptance of the existence of non-functional elements in the socio-cultural milieu. In other words, what the new school of thinking appears to be trying to say, is that, there are elements in human culture and human social organisation that are not really rational, particularly if rationality is considered in its more limited ecological form. This somewhat unusual element involved in the system has been developed further by Srinivas himself, in emphasising the concept of 'Sanskritization'⁸. The particular way of formulating the issue, however, tends to leave the frame of interaction undefined, a lacunae, that must be considered quite serious.⁹ It is also desirable, at this point, to make the distinction between hierarchy based on ritual purity and pure hierarchy. The connotation of the expression 'pure' is obviously very different in the two cases. There is, nevertheless a link in so far as hierarchy based on purely ritual purity tends to pure hierarchy, as ritual purity tends to be more a-functional and abstract. This is to say that human existence must really be understood as simultaneously dwelling in a multi-dimensional space, so that it is futile to look for the justification of an element in one domain of human socio-cultural existence, in a very different domain of human material existence. It is not quite the same thing as to say that certain elements in human culture and social habits exist for no reason at all. The emphasis is on suggesting that the elements in respect of a given domain may derive its logical or functional sustenance only from the logic of its own domain, and not on the basis of anything else.

6. The development seems to have completed its full circle with the publication of Dumont's *Homo-Hierarchicus*¹⁰. The major point made by Dumont, appears to be that, by its very nature, human classificatory thinking is bound to be hierarchical. This may be called the pure theory of hierarchical thinking in relation to human values. In this sense, it may even be said that Dumont's work does not pertain to sociology of culture or cultural anthropology as such. In other words, the whole thing relates not so much to what is or what has been, but what must be. Fortunately, Dumont does not restrict himself completely to what may be called the pure theory of human classificatory thinking. What he tries to do is to establish that since ordering is unavoidable even without conscious classificatory efforts, there is logic in a human value system of a pure theory of hierarchical ordering. What is really interesting in this context is that, and what Dumont apparently succeeds in showing, is that all formal or informal ordering contains arbitrary elements and, therefore, it is possible also to think of a purely arbitrary hierarchical ordering even in any attempted understanding of a phenomenon like caste, as actually obtaining in the specific Indian context.

For, a general statement of the basic position away from functional view of caste Moore's¹¹ position may be considered relevant.

7. Trying to draw from both the streams, but more in line with the recent trend that tends to emphasis pure ordering, Bose¹² has recently tried to show that a completely generalised view of the caste system as prevalent in India has four unique invariable features. They are :

- (1) The concept of ritual purity,
- (2) The relative fixity of only the top and bottom positions of the ordering,
- (3) The comparatively wide regional variations in the status of the dominant caste, and
- (4) The purely ritualistic nature of the superiority conflict relationship between the dominant caste and the highest caste in the hierarchy.

One of the most interesting observations that high-lights Bose's survey, is that there seems to be a large body of empirical evidence in support of the proposition that whenever the ritual supremacy of the Brahmin is sought to be translated into a real supremacy, the ordering seems to break down. For a more exhaustive chronicling of possible elements involved in the caste system see Hutton¹³.

8. While Bose comes to the foregoing conclusions from an exhaustive study of the available literature with great thoroughness, he fails to offer any clear reasons, as to why it is that only these features of the caste system appears to be universal. His work nevertheless remains significant, in so far as, it tries to relate actual power domination to land holdings, which is known to be a major source of power from the more recent sociological and sephological studies¹⁴. It follows, that the historical significance of political domination as arbitrarily frozen by the imposition of British power in India between 1757 and 1818, would have a major role in determining the existing caste structure. Thus, it is unlikely that any actual explanation of relative caste position would ever be freed from an element of the historical or accidental, even though the expression of historical or accidental has to be understood in this very limited sense. That it can be accidental in a more general sense has, however, also been claimed by such authors as Moore cited earlier.

9. It is the purpose of the present exercise to suggest that Bose's summerization of the four essential features of the caste system, has in fact a logic of its own, which Bose himself has, however, not suggested. In their recent studies of Indian social environment Thomson¹⁵ has tried to introduce the concept of the 'arena' for analitical purposes. The specific purpose for which they have tried to use the arena concept, is to explain the relative prefounderance of the idea of consensus as against a majority decision, as

prevalent in India. There seems to be some justification for holding the view that Indian political idiom favours consensus as against majority decisions. It is, nevertheless, a fact that successful use of the consensus method can only relate to face to face groups. Once, therefore, the idiom is arbitrarily shifted to the entire population of a large geographically delimited arena like the constituency, the method fails.⁽¹⁶⁾ All the same, the representatives, elected on the basis of a majority decision from the constituencies in India, are not vested with the same degree of legitimacy as their counterparts in advanced western countries. This fact suggests the importance of exploring the logic of both the consensus method and the majority selection method for establishing legitimacy of power.

10. It would follow from the analysis of the type attempted by Bailey, ⁽¹⁷⁾ that the general acceptance of the idea of consensus had evolved in the country like India, to cater for the fact that not only was the total area involved, geographically vast, but the law-givers also did not have any clear idea about the different types of group adjustments and social organisational problems, involved in the various parts of the area of civilisation, involving a very large population, that they were attempting to organise. This tendency was not rectified by the emergence of the Muslim power, which it could have, on account of the rise of the negative element of the concept of Hindu nationalism by exclusion. It was, therefore, natural that neither the concept of the nation standing for a vast aggregation of different types of people, nor a clearly defined large geographical area corresponding to the modern concept of a country, could have been a part of the pattern of thinking of the Indian law-givers. What is of even greater importance in the present context, is that the particular proposition regarding the absence of a concept like the arena and, therefore, the analytical concept of a nation or a country being alien to Indian thinking, explains a great deal that has gone into the building up of the caste system. In fact, it can be offered as a hypothesis, that the proposition is quite central to the understanding of thinking about the society in India. It also seems to offer a key to the understanding of the concept and the basic idea underlying the emergence of the caste system. Perhaps, it is even more significant, in so far as, it can be shown that the logical implication of an attempted social ordering in the absence of the arena concept would quite logically lead to the four features that have been shown to be basic for the caste system by Bose. In other words, that the Bose's four essential elements of the caste system must appear as a residual minimum in any empirical investigation of the caste system as observed in India, when the hierarchical ordering of a large number of arenas are sought to be explained and held together in a generalised frame. On the obverse, the same relationship would establish the analytical value of Bose's basic points.

11. The essence of the matter seems to be that, what the Hindu law-givers were trying to create was not so much a pure hierarchy of the

Dumont's type, but a hierarchy, independent of the arena. It was essential for the system that the superiority inferiority relation would have to be independent of any large arena or specific territory, and by that reason, of any specific population as well. In so far as, the arena concept was alien to the Hindu law-givers or, for that matter, to the social groups that participated in the making of the Indian society, it follows that the idea of a majority could not be brought into use, for the purposes of social ordering, hierarchical or otherwise. Quite clearly a decision by a majority involves the limiting of population and by implication, the limiting of population in respect of a territory, that is, it involves the explicit recognition of the arena concept. It may also be necessary, at this stage, to emphasise the basic difference of some sort of an a-functional or even disfunctional theory of the origin of the caste system of the Senart⁽¹⁸⁾ or Hocart⁽¹⁹⁾ type, and the concept of pure hierarchy of the Dumont variety.

12. Without an idea of the arena and without any knowledge of how large a population, or for that matter how large a territorial limit they were really trying to regulate or legislate about, it was necessary for the Indian law-givers to accept categories of thinking that operate or have relevance and meaning, without any reference to a fixed population or to a determined territory. The idea of a territory or population, considered prenatural today, are essentially negative ideas and hardly satisfactory for analytical purposes. Unfortunately, the idea of a social structure, however, satisfying logically, is being found difficult for analytical use, without getting into the slippery area of biological analogy.⁽²⁰⁾ The challenge that the Hindu law-givers took up was, therefore, a serious one, and the fact that they did not solve it satisfactorily can hardly be held against them. In this sense alone, what they were trying to specify may be considered to be an exercise in pure hierarchy making. It stands to reason that neither the participants nor the classifiers were even remotely aware of the concept of pure hierarchy in Dumont's sense. What is, however, entirely clear, is that decision by majority was entirely ruled out as a method of problem solving in terms of the categories with which they were thinking about the matter.

13. It becomes necessary to examine why any attempt to derive a hierarchy independent of the concept of arena, would necessarily lead to some of the attributes found to be essential, for instance by Bose, just as it would lead to the method of consensus as against the method of majority. The first reason is that the dominant group cannot be defined in terms of its majority. On the other hand, the fact that the local dominant land holding communities cannot be ignored, was also relevant. There can be no doubt that continuity of the socio-economic milieu of ancient and medieval India cannot be dis-associated from land holding. Under conditions of ethnically regional

plural land holding based domination, it is obviously necessary to look for something of a ritual or pure supremacy of a non-land holding category. This follows from the fact that no dominant land holding groups would accept the superiority of other tribal or ethnically different land holding groups. One way of dealing with the problem would be to solve it in terms of a balance of power between such land holding groups. This second solution involves introducing the arena concept. It is, therefore, natural for the dominant land holding groups themselves to accept the ritual superiority of some non-land holding minority groups.

14. Two or three associated issues remain, and must be sorted out. It may be argued that the ordering in the absence of the arena concept, would lead to the emergence of ritual superiority of a minority group. By itself, it would not indicate which end of the hierarchy should be at the top and which and should be at the bottom. Even though it would guaranty the fluidity of the middle ranks of the hierarchy. But the potentiality of possible numerical strength and the ideas about normal distribution of quality would, however, be enough to make the hierarchy Brahmin side up. The only other question is the problem of pure versus ritual hierarchy. As a matter of fact, if the ritual is non-functional, it would tend to become unique and re-inforced not only by vague functional nuances but also by elements of tribal totemic ritualism. None of these features are, therefore, enough to indicate the departure from pure hierarchy. Thus the idea of an actual acceptance of a pure hierarchical ordering, independent of a pre-determined and clearly defined arena or population, would tend to produce a system similar to the Indian caste system, and would, by the impact of its own logic, contain all the four essential element of the caste system, namely (i) Brahmin superiority and fixed horizontal terminality, (ii) fluidity of the middle ranks, (iii) the concept of ritual purity and (iv) considerable regional variations in respect of the rules of ritual purity as also the relationships between the hierarchy of groups.

15. The one major point that would still remain untouched is the question of political power vis a vis the power of land holding on the one hand and military power on the other. These problems must involve complicated issues, and it is not likely that any simple solution will be found about them. It follows, however, from the preceding arguments, that stable political power as such in the modern sense of stability and legitimacy cannot exist in the absence of a pre-determined population or arena. Therefore, political power can operate in the socio-economic milieu as described in the foregoing, only in the form of military power and the power of land holding. Fortunately, for this analysis, military power by itself is extremely likely to perpetuate itself by translating its temporary superiority into land holding rights. In this background, it is possible to consider the difficulty and abstract the concept of power in terms of its reduced form of superior tenancy rights. The position of the land holding rights in relation to the ritual

superiority of the Brahmins has already been explained earlier. What this view does show is that dominant groups on the basis of present political power based on land holding rights would have wide variations, when the over all situation is considered as a whole, as arising out of the transformation of historically current military power into more permanent social power in terms of land holding, which in turn, would only be able to secure legitimacy in terms of ritual ordering, if it were to avoid, or is prevented from avoiding hierarchy reordering by military means, as between land-based dominant groups in the adjoining neighbourhoods.

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DATE OF THE BHĀRATA WAR

by

SRI RABINDRAKUMAR BHATTACHARYYA SIDDHANTASHASTREE

The great battle of Kurukṣetra, also known as the Bhārata War in which the military might of India had been totally extinguished for the time being, was undoubtedly a turning point in the history of India. All the great heroes of this vast sub-continent excepting a very few were killed in this battle. With the demise of these great generals, their military genius and skills also vanished from this land. As time passed on, the warrior class became weaker and weaker, and after a pretty long time, foreign heroes with their plundering armies made ventures to invade this prosperous land causing immense hardships to the peace-loving people. On the other hand, numerous historical facts are known from the great book *Mahābhārata* and its junior contemporaries, all of which written on the main theme of the said great battle. So, if we can determine the date of this great battle, the time for many other important events, uncertain or incorrectly ascertained till to-day, may be precisely found out. The date of the Bhārata War, therefore, is very important to the students of history. Unfortunately, the scholars of modern time, who have seriously studied the subject, differ from each other to such an extent that the ordinary readers, as a general rule, hesitate to accept any of their observations as correct. I, therefore, feel it an urgent necessity to write a few passages on this very important point.

In the days of antiquity, so far as we know, there did not exist any inscription, or even a book of history with precise dates as we find now-a-days. The modern scholars, therefore, had to rely solely upon the statements of different authorities which seem to be contradictory to each other. The scholars, regarding their interpretation of different ancient texts on the subject, may be grouped under four different heads. According to one group, the battle itself is an imaginary one. The second group holds that the battle is a historical fact which occurred in the 14th or 15th century B. C. Most prominent of the authorities belonging to this group are Mr. Vincent Smith, Alexander Cunningham, Mr. Girindra Shekhar Bose and Professor Tarakesvar Bhattacharyya, the last belonging to the Hindu University of Vārānasi. Mr. Smith places the battle at 1428 B. C. (1), Cunningham at 1430 B. C. (2), Mr. Bose at 1416 B. C. (3) and Prof. T. Bhattacharyya in 1432-1481 B. C. According to the Beng writer Bankim Chandra Chatterjee the battle took

place in the year 1430 B. C. The third group places the battle around 2500 B. C., where as according to the 4th group it occurred in 3102 B. C. The most prominent authorities belonging to the third group are Varāha-mihira and Kahlana, and those belonging to the 4th group are Rabikīrtti of the Aihole Inscription of Pulakesin II of Gujrat and the late Mahāmahopādhyāya Haridās Siddhāntavāgish of Calcutta. Though there are some other views, such as that of Mr. F. E. Pargiter, who places the war around 950 B. C. (4), I do not like to count them because of their basically wrong approach.

None of the above views, according to my consideration is correct. As regards the scholars belonging to the first group, they are absolutely wrong. We cannot believe that the *Mahābhārata* which has been described by its author himself (5) as well as by other high authorities (6) as a book of history, has given us wrong information regarding its main theme. More-over, the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, *Harivaṃśa* and some other books of antiquity have reliably accepted the statement of the *Mahābhārata* as correct. I do not find any reason for disbelieving these great authorities. In the later days also, Varāha-mihira the renowned astronomer, Kahlana the author of the *Rājatarāṅgini* and Rabikīrtti, the court-poet of Pulakesin II of Gujrat are found to have accepted the great Bhārata War as a historical fact. These authorities cannot be disbelieved regarding the occurrence of such a great event.

The scholars belonging to the second group rely upon a verse found with a slight difference in reading in the three different *Purāṇas*, i.e., *Bhāgavatā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Vāyu*. The different readings of the verse are as follows:

- (a) *ārabhya bhavato janma yāvannandābhiṣecanam
etad varṣa-sahasrantu śataṃ pañcadaśottaram.*

Bhāgavata-purāṇa 12.2.21

- (b) *yāvat pariṁsito janma yāvannandābhiṣecanam
etad varṣa-sahasrantu jñeyam pañcadaśottaram.*

Viṣṇupurāṇa; Part iv; ch. 24

- (c) *yāvat pariṁsito janma yāvannandābhiṣecanam*
etad varṣa-sahasrantu jñeyam pañcadaśuttaram.*

Vāyupurāṇa 99/415

The first reading of the verse, as explained by the modern scholars gives the period as 1115 years, the second reading as 1015 years, and the third reading as 1050 years, each of which is said to have been the distance between the birth of Parikṣit and the coronation of Nanda I. The last of the Nanda kings, according to the historians was slain by Chandragupta whose coronation took place in 322 B. C. (7). The nine

*In some of the editions this line is read as "*mahāpadmābhiṣekāttu janma yāvat pariṁsitah.*"

kings of the Nanda family are said to have reigned for a short period only. The coronation of the last Nanda King is believed to have taken place in 324 B. C. The scholars belonging to this group, therefore, hold that the great battle of Kurukṣetra took place in the 14th or 15th century B.C. This view, according to my consideration is quite incorrect for the following reasons:

(I) The mention of king Nanda in the aforesaid verses proves that these were interpolations of a much later date, because the original text of the *Bhāgavata*, *Viṣṇu* and *Vāyu* Purāṇas must have existed long ago. Mention of these books are found, not only in the other Purāṇas, but in the *Mahābhārata* also, which was compiled by Vyāsa just after the end of the great battle. The *Mahābhārata* was read by Vaiśampāyana in the court of Janamejaya, the son of Parikṣit, whose coronation took place 96 years after the great battle (8). The remote antiquity of the Purāṇa-literature is indicated by the very term *Purāṇa* which means 'ancient'. This fact is further proved by a reference to the Purāṇa-literature in the 7th book of the *Chāndogyaopaniṣad* (9).

(II) The time recorded in the above verses, as explained by the modern scholars, goes against the testimony of the high authorities like Kālidāsa, Varāha-mihira, Bhāskarāchāryya, Kalhana, Rabikīrtti and others.

(III) The verses, if explained in the above way, go against the testimony of the *Mahābhārata* itself, which is undoubtedly the highest authority in the subject.

(IV) The reading of the verse, found in the modern editions of the *Viṣṇu* and *Vāyu* Purāṇas as quoted above, must have some serious mistake of the copyist.

(V) The verses may be explained in a different way; and such an explanation may fall in line with other reliable evidences. Details about all the five different points mentioned above, will be discussed later.

The scholars belonging to the third group rely upon a verse of the *Bṛhat-saṃhitā*, ascribed to Varāha-mihira, as well as upon the evidence of the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*. In chapter XIII of the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* the following verse is found:

‘āsan maghāsu munayah śāsati prthvīm yudhiṣṭhira nṛpatau
śaḍ-dvi-pañca-dvi-yutah śakakālastasya rājñaśca.’

(During the reign of king Yudhiṣṭhira, the sages (*saptarṣis*) stood with the constellation of *Maghā*. The era of this king existed for 2526 years.) Kalhana thought that Yudhiṣṭhira's era was immediately followed by the Saka era. He, therefore, on the authority of this verse held that, Yudhiṣṭhira's coronation took place in the year 658 of the Kali Age corresponding 2448 B.C. (2526-78): We therefore see in the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* of Kalhana, a verse declaring that the great battle between the Kurus

and the Pāṇḍavas took place in the year 653 of the Kali era. The verse runs as follows:

‘śateṣu ṣaṭsu sārḍheṣu tryadhikeṣu ca bhūtale
kalergateṣu varṣāṇāmadhavan kuru-pāṇḍavāḥ.’
Rājatarāṅgiṇi 1.51

The compound word ‘kuru-pāṇḍavāḥ’ in the above verse, as I understand, was used by Kalhana in the sense of ‘the battle between the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas’. On the authority of the above verses, the scholars belonging to the third group hold that the Bhārata war occurred in the 25th century B.C. (Kali Age 3102 B.C. – 653 B.C. = 2449 or 2448 B.C.) Following points are to be considered in this connection:

(i) There is a doubt as to whether the author of the *Bṛhatsamhitā* was a gem in the court of king Vikramāditya of Ujjayini or not. *Panca-siddhāntikā*, a book on astronomy attributed to one Varāha-mihira is said to have been composed in the 5th century B.C. The author of this book has taken the year 417 (10) of the Śaka era for showing the illustration, as to how the *ahargana* is to be determined. Scholars like Colebrooke, Kern and the like hold that the book was composed in the said year. If this be a fact, then we may hold that, this Varāhamihira was different from the great Varāhamihira, a gem in Vikramāditya’s court, who according to Kālidāsa, lived in the 1st century B.C. The late Mahāśhopādhyaya Haridas Siddhāntavāgīś also, on different occasions has told us that there were two Varāhamihiras, one living in the 1st century B.C., and the other in the 5th century A.D. (11). *Bṛhatsamhitā* might be composed by the later Varāhamihira, whose evidence is less reliable than that of Kālidāsa, a gem in Vikramāditya’s court. Kālidāsa in his *Jyotirvidābharaṇa* has told us that, this book was composed by him after consultation with Varāhamihira and other astronomers of Vikramāditya’s court in the year 3068 of the Kali Age (12) corresponding 34 B.C.

I am aware of the fact that according to most of the modern historians, the book *Jyotirvidābharaṇa* was not composed by the great Kālidāsa, but it was a book of a much later date. I cannot agree with these scholars for various reasons, most prominent of which are as follows:

(a) that, the details given by the poet in the book undoubtedly prove that, it was composed by the great poet Kālidāsa, one of the gems in Vikramāditya’s court in the year 34 B.C.

(b) that, the author himself has told us on his book that before compilation of this book he composed his three other famous *kāvyas*, i.e., *Raghuvamśa*, *Kumārasambhava*, and *Meghadūta* (*kāvya-trayaṃ sumati-kṛdraghuvamśapūrvam*).

(c) that, the commentator Bhāvamuni also has admitted the fact that the book was composed by Kālidāsa the great, and

(d) that, there does not exist any valid reason in support of the said view of the modern historians.

The argument that in or around the 1st century B.C., no inscription shows any king having any title ending in *āditya*, according to my consideration has no value. It cannot be expected that all information should be found in the inscriptions. It is a mere surmise that no king in the 1st century B.C. used the title Vikramāditya; and a surmise has no potency to refute a literary evidence as found in the *Jyotirvidābharaṇa* of Kālidāsa. The literary style of the said book also shows that it was composed by an exceptionally talented poet. Who other than Kālidāsa could produce a big volume of book on a harsh subject like astronomy in such a melodious style? The traditions of India, especially those of the Jains also testify to the fact that a powerful emperor held the title Vikramāditya in the 1st century B.C.

(ii) If the date recorded by the author of the *Brhatsamhitā* be incorrect, then the statement of Kahlāṇa in his *Rājataraṅgiṇī* which apparently was based on the former's record, is bound to be incorrect.

(iii) The author of the *Brhatsamhitā* simply tells us that the era of Yudhiṣṭhira had been in use for 2526 years only. This simply indicates that after the said period a new era came into being. *Brhatsamhitā* does not tell us which this new era was. We know from different sources that there existed at least two more eras older than the Vikrama era. The Arsacid (Parthian) era took place in 248 B.C., and the Seleucid era in 312 B.C. (13) There might be some more eras about which we know nothing at present. Who can ascertain that there did not exist another era commencing from the 7th century B.C.?

(iv) This view goes against the statement of Rabikīrti, the compiler of the inscription of Pulakeśin II of Gujrat, who in the year 556 of the Saka era, corresponding 634 A.D. has told us that this inscription was composed at a time when 3735 years of the Kali Age had elapsed (14). According to this inscription the great Bhārata War was fought in the year $(3735-634)=3101$ B.C.

(v) This view goes against the testimony of the *Mahābhārata*, according to which the battle took place around the juncture of the Dvāpara and the Kali Ages (15). As regards the Kali Age, we know from the great Bhāskarāchāryya (16) as well as from the author of the famous book *Makaranda* (17) that, it started 3179 years before the commencement of the Saka era. As the Saka era started in 78 A.D., we know that the Kali Age commenced in 3101 B.C.

As regards the view of the 4th group of scholars mentioned above, I like to say that the year suggested by them was the starting point of the Kali Age, which in fact came into being 36 years after the occurrence of the great war. In this connection, I desire to rely upon the following facts:

(i) As the *Mahābhārata* was composed mainly on the theme of the great battle, and as it is an admitted book on history, evidence of this book cannot be reasonably disbelieved. From the *Mahābhārata* we undoubtedly know that the great battle took place around the juncture of the Dvāpara and the Kali Ages. As no particular year is mentioned, we are free to accept any year within the limit of 50 years on either side of the actual point of juncture; because, this was the rule of the mathematicians in ancient India¹⁸.

(ii) The authority of Bhāskarāchāryya, as well as of the author of the *Makaranda* regarding time and astronomy, under no circumstances can be disbelieved. From these authorities we know that the Kali Age started in 3101 B.C., which date, according to the *Mahābhārata* and other books of high authority, was 36 years later than the Bhārata War. The *Mahābhārata* tells us that, after the great battle, Yudhiṣṭhira reigned for 36 years, and that in the 36th year of his reign Śrīkṛṣṇa left this world, and that after a short while, having installed Parikṣit on the throne, the Pāṇḍavas went to heaven¹⁹. It is further known from different sources that the Kali Age started on the very day on which Śrīkṛṣṇa left this world²⁰.

(iii) The testimony of the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* may be reasonably disbelieved for two different reasons: (a) that, it relied upon a wrong authority (the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*) and (b) that, it goes against the most reliable evidence of the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas.

(iv) The testimony of the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* may be disbelieved for three different reasons: (a) that, it goes against the testimony of the great poet Kālidāsa, (b) that, this author, though named Varāhamihira, was different from the great Varāhamihira, a gem in Vikramāditya's court, and (c) that, it goes against the testimony of the high authorities like Vyāsa, Bhāskarāchāryya, Rabikīrtti and others.

(v) I have already said above that the verse recorded in the *Bhāgavata*. *Viṣṇu* and *Vāyu* Purāṇas regarding the length of time between the birth of Parikṣit and the coronation of Nanda may be explained in a different way. As regards the verse of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* mentioned above, its last portion may be translated as '2500 years'. The Sanskrit term *śahasra* undoubtedly means 1000. As regards the portion *śataṃ pañca daśottaram*, we may explain it as 500 (*śataṃ pañca*) + 1000 (*daśottaram*). Thus the entire period may be calculated as (1000 + 500 + 1000 =) 2500 years.

As the verse is a Puranic text, there may be some grammatical irregularities. The phrase *śataṃ pañca* might have been used for the phrase *śatāni pañca* and the word *daśottaram* for *daśottarāni*, of which the part *daśa* might be directly related to *śata* and indirectly to *uttara*. Such archaic forms are not rare in the Purāṇas as well as in the *Mahābhārata*. Truth demands that when some apparent discrepancies

are found in different authorities, an attempt should be made to see as to whether the said discrepancy can be made away with. The above interpretation of mine, therefore, cannot be disregarded. The late M.M. Haridās Siddhāntavāgīś also took the same period of 2500 years as indicated by the above verse, though his process of interpretation was somewhat different. The fact that in ancient literature the cardinal numerals *pāñca*, *daśa*, *śata* etc. and other words connected with such numerals were irregularly used in singular number even in the sense of plural, is known from different verses of the *Mahābhārata* and the different Purāṇas. For example we may refer to the verses 15th and 17th of chapter 11 of the *Virāṭaparvān* of the *Mahābhārata*²¹. In the former the word *śatam* is used in the sense of *śatāni*, and in the latter the word *yojanam* in the sense of *yojanāni*, in the similar way as we have found in the above verse of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*.

As regards the date of coronation of Nanda I, the scholars are found to be divided in their opinion. But it is sure that the said coronation took place either in the 5th or in the 6th century B.C.²². As the period mentioned in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* is an approximate one, this falls in line with the testimony of the *Mahābhārata* as well as of Kālidāsa, Rābhikīrti and the like. As regards the reading *jñeyam* for *śatam* in the second line of the verse recorded in some editions of the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, and the reading *pañcāśaduttaram* for *pañcadaśottaram* in that of the *Jāyupurāṇa*, I am sure that, these are clerical mistakes.

Now, it is to be considered as to why the scholars belonging to the second group mentioned above, adopted their view already noted. So far as I understand, they relied upon a verse of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*²³, as well as of the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*²⁴, according to which the *Saptarṣis* who stood with the constellation of *Maghā* at the time of Yudhiṣṭhira, were standing with the constellation of *Pūrvāṣādhā* at the time of Nanda's coronation. As in the counting of the *Nakṣatras*, *Pūrvāṣādhā* is the eleventh from *Maghā*, the scholars belonging to this group were under the impression that both the verses (that of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* and that of the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*) suggest the length of period from Yudhiṣṭhira to Nanda approximately by 1100 years. They also relied upon the testimony of the *Bhāgavata*, *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, and *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* that the *Saptarṣis* stand with each constellation (*Nakṣatra*) for approximately 100 human years. It is unfortunate that the said scholars did not pay any heed to the following facts:

(a) Varāhamihira, the author of the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*, while admitting that the *Saptarṣis* stood with the *Maghā* at the time of Yudhiṣṭhira and that they stand with each *Nakṣatra* for approximately 100 human years (*ekaikasmīnṛkṣe śatam śatam te caranti varsānām*) has told us that the Saka era started after 2526 years from the date of Yudhiṣṭhira. This clearly

indicates that the process of calculation adopted by the said scholars were totally incorrect even according to Varāhamihira.

(b) In the almanac, we often notice that the heavenly bodies do not follow any particular rule in the process of their general movement. Vṛhaspati, according to the general rule is expected to move from one *Rāśi* to another after a period of full one year. But he seldom follows this rule. We often see him moving very slowly, and on many occasions in a carved way. Thus we see that on different occasions this very Vṛhaspati passes two or even three *Rāśis* within a single year. The same rule is followed by other heavenly bodies as well. The movement of the *Saptarṣis* from *Maghā* to *Pūrvāṣādhā*, therefore does not necessarily mean that they took about 1100 years for covering this journey. The fact that the rule for the *Saptarṣis* to stand with each *Nakṣatra* for 100 years is not imperative, is also known from a verse of the *Vāyupurāṇa* which tells us that on different occasions the *Saptarṣis* take 3080 years²⁵ instead of 2700 years for covering a full journey on their orbit. The *Skandapurāṇa* gives a much longer period in this respect.

(c) It is not clearly said in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* or any other book as to whether the *Saptarṣis* passed 11 *Nakṣatras* or they passed $(27 + 11 =) 38$ *Nakṣatras* during the period. It may be that, they passed from *Maghā* to *Revati* (the last of the *Nakṣatras*), and then again they marched to *Pūrvāṣādhā* covering 38 *Nakṣatras*. I have already shown above that the distance of time from Yudhiṣṭhira to Nanda was more than 2500 years. The Great Bear (*Saptarṣis*), if moved sometimes with their *atiōāra-gati* (extreme speed) and sometimes in a carved way, might quite reasonably cover 2500 years or so for going through 37 or 38 *Nakṣatras*.

In consideration of the above facts, one should reasonably hold that the period between Yudhiṣṭhira and Nanda, as recorded in the *Bhāgavata* and *Viṣṇu* Purāṇas had not been 1100 years or so; but it might be much longer. As regards the verse of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, I have already explained that, it suggests a period approximately of 2500 years, as the distance of time between the birth of Parikṣit (who was born just after the great battle) and the coronation of Nanda I. It is therefore necessary to make an attempt for finding out the date of Nanda's coronation. In the Hathigumpha inscription of Khāravel (of Kāliṅga) a Nandarāja is found to be mentioned twice, and is said to have opened a canal 300 year back. It is common sense that the 300 years mentioned here is an approximate period. As regards the date of Khāravel, scholars differ in their views. According to some scholars, he belonged to the 2nd century B.C.; whereas according to others, he flourished in the 1st century B.C. (26). Prof. D. C. Sircar holds that Khāravel might have existed towards the end of the 1st century B.C. (27). If Chandragupta Maurya is accepted to have usurped the throne from the last Nanda king in or around 322 B.C., and

if the coronation of the last Nanda king is held at or around 324 B.C., and king Khāraśel towards the end of the 1st century B.C.; then the above inscription should have referred to the last Nanda king. In this connection following facts also should be considered :

The *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* tells us that the eight descendants of Mahāpadma Nanda (Nanda I) reigned approximately for 100 years. The verse runs as follows :

*'tasya cāṣṭau bhaviṣyanti sumālya-pramukhāḥ sutāḥ
ya imāṃ bhokṣyanti mahīm rājānaśca śataṃ samāh'*

Bhāgavata 7.5.5

From the *Matsya-purāṇa* we know that Mahāpadma Nanda had a long life of 88 years, and that his eight descendants reigned approximately for 12 years each, one after another (*kramāt*).

The verses of the *Matsyapurāṇa* run as follows ;

*'ekarāt sa mahāpadma ekacchatro bhaviṣyati
aṣṭāṣīti tu varṣāṇi pṛthivyāṇca bhaviṣyati.*

*.....
supadmādi sutā hyaṣṭau samā dvādaśa te nṛpāḥ
mahāpadmasya paryāye bhaviṣyanti nṛpāḥ kramāt.*

Matsyapurāṇa; 272/19-20

Prof. Hemchandra Raychoudhuri in his 'Political History of Ancient India' (p. 236) has wrongly said that, according to the *Matsyapurāṇa*, Mahāpadma Nanda reigned for 88 years. The very text of the *Matsyapurāṇa*, quoted above shows that Mahāpadma Nanda lived (*bhaviṣyati*) and not reigned for 88 years. On the other hand, *Vāyupurāṇa* tells us that Mahāpadma Nanda reigned for 28 years. According to Prof. Raychaudhuri, this period of 28 years is indicative of the term of his sovereignty, over a widely extended empire, and that his actual reign might be a longer one. This assumption of Prof. Raychaudhuri, according to my consideration is quite reasonable. If we hold that Mahāpadma Nanda ascended the throne at the age of 25 years, then the entire period of his reign might be $(88 - 25 =) 63$ years. The whole period of the reign of his 8 descendants cover $(12 \times 8 =) 96$ years. Thus we find that the reign of the Nanda family lasted for $(63 + 96 =) 159$ years.

If Chandragupta Maurya really usurped the throne from the last Nanda king in or around 322 B.C., then the coronation of Nanda I might fall in or around the year $(322 + 159 =) 481$ B.C. But the *Matsyapurāṇa* tells us that the 9th of the Nanda kings was usurped by Kauṭilya, apparently a minister of the said king, and that the sovereign power rested with him (probably also with his successors) for approximately 100 years.

and that after this period the crown went to the Maurya king. The text of the *Matsyapurāṇa* runs as follows:

‘uddharisṣyati kauṭilyaḥ samā-dvādaśabhiḥ sūtān
bhuktvā mahīm varṣasatam tato mauryān gamiṣyati.’

Matsyapurāṇa 272/21

Let us therefore add 100 years with the above period which then will come to $(481 + 100 =) 581$ B.C. This being an approximate period, may fall in line with the testimony of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* mentioned above (28).

As regards the view of Mr. Pargiter, the date fixed by him was based on an incomplete chronology. Names of all the kings of any dynasty are not mentioned anywhere. The names found in the chronology belong only to the most important kings of the family. The very approach of Mr. Pargiter and the other scholars of his type therefore being absolutely wrong, I do not like to waste my time and energy for refuting their views.

As all the periods mentioned above are approximate, one cannot fix any particular date with certainty as the date for Nanda's coronation, if he approaches in the above way. On the other hand, there exists another way, an approach through which may fix with certainty the date for occurrence of the Bhārata War as well as of Yudhiṣṭhira's coronation, if not the date for coronation of Nanda. Let us now approach through that way.

We definitely know from different sources, such as the modern almanac, the great poet Kālidāsa, the great astronomers Bhāskarāchāryya and Makarandakāra (the author of the book entitled *Makaranda*), Mahāmahopādhyāya Haridās Siddhāntavāgish and such other authorities that the Kali Age started in 3102 or 3101 B.C. From the *Bhāgavata* and *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*s we further know that the Kali Age commenced on the very date on which Lord Kṛṣṇa left this world. From the *Mahābhārata* we further know that Kṛṣṇa left this world in the 36th year of the reign of Yudhiṣṭhira⁽²⁹⁾ who ascended the throne just after the great battle. We may therefore hold with certainty that the great Bhārata War occurred in the year 3136 B.C. As regards the month, we know from the *Bhāratasāvitṛī* that it was the first month of the Hemanta season⁽³⁰⁾. From the same verse of the *Bhāratasāvitṛī* we further know that the battle started on the 13th day of the bright fortnight and that the star at the time was *Bharaṇī*. From another verse of the same book we know that the battle which lasted for 18 days only, came to an end on the 15th day of the dark fortnight⁽³¹⁾. As regards the Hemanta season, we know from different sources that, it covered the solar months of Kārttika and *Agrahāyaṇa*. We may therefore arrive at the right conclusion that the Bhārata War commenced in the solar month of Kārttika,

starting on the 13th day of the bright fortnight, when the moon stood with the *Bharani nakṣatra*, in the year 3136 B. C. (³²).

As regards the view of Prof. Tārakeśvar Bhattāchāryya recorded in his book 'The Date of the Bhārata War', this cannot be accepted for following reasons :

i) That, he had some pre-conceived idea in his mind regarding the date in question.

ii) That, he refused to accept the testimony of the *Bhārata-sāvitri*, of which the authority was accepted even by Nilakanṭha and M. M. Haridās Siddhāntavāgiṣh, the renowned commentators on the *Mahābhārata*.

iii) That, he failed to grasp the correct meaning of some Sanskrit verses, due to his lack of knowledge in Sanskrit Grammar.

iv) That, the astronomical calculations made by him, were based on wrong assumption, and were even imaginary on some particular occasions.

Let us clarify the above reasons for convenience of our readers.

i) It appears that like many other scholars, Prof. T. Bhattacharyya also was misled by the wrong idea that the aforesaid verse recorded in the *Bhāgavata* (12. 2. 26), *Viṣṇu* (Part-IV; ch. 24) and *Vāyu* (99/415) Purāṇas gives a date of approximately 1100 years as the distance of time from Yudhiṣṭhira to Nanda I, and as such he reared a pre-conceived idea in his mind for determining the date of the Bhārata War around 1400 B.C.

ii) Nilakanṭha, the greatest commentator on the *Mahābhārata*, while interpreting a verse of the *Bhīṣmaparbaṇ* (ch. 17) has quoted a few verses from the *Bhāratasāvitri* as authority. Many other authors also belonging to different branches of Sanskrit have accepted the testimony of the *Bhāratasāvitri* as unquestionable. Such a reliable authority has been totally ignored by Prof. T. Bhattacharyya. The testimony of the *Bhārata-sāvitri* has already been mentioned above.

iii) From the interpretation of some of the very important lines of the *Mahābhārata* as given by Prof. T. Bhattacharyya, we know that, due to his lack of knowledge in Sanskrit, he fell under serious misconception; as a result of which the date of the Bhārata War suggested by him was far different from its correct date. Let us show a few instances of the same :

I have already said above that the star on the first day of the war was *Bharani*. But Prof. T. Bhattacharyya has suggested that it would be *Jyēṣṭhā*. As an evidence in his favour, he has quoted a verse from the *Udyogaparbaṇ* (Ch, 142) of the *Mahābhārata*, which runs as follows :

'saptamācāpi divasādamāvāsyā bhaviṣyati
saṁgrāmo yujyatāṁ tasyāntāmāhuḥ śakra-daivatām.'

In the *Mahābhārata* published by the Gita Press of Gorakhpur, this verse occurs in the *Udyogaparbaṇ* (142/18) in the speech of Kṛṣṇa,

which was made in reply to that of Karna. The description starts with the line 'saumoyam varttate māsah supṛāpayavasendhanah' (The month in which food and faggots are available in abundance is near at hand). This clearly indicates that the month of Agraḥāyana in which food and faggots are abundant was coming nearer. Keeping an eye on the above line, we may rightly translate the verse quoted by Prof. T. Bhattacharyya in the following way :

'after the seventh day of the said month, there will be the new-moon day, which is said to have Śakra (Indra) as its presiding deity. Let the war be finished on that day.'

According to Prof. T. Bhattacharyya, the verse quoted above indicates that the war started on the new-moon day. This militates against all the evidences.

The pronoun *tām* in the expression 'tāmāhuḥ śakraḍaivatām' undoubtedly stands for the noun *amāvāsyā*, which is a feminine form. There is no word in the verse which can indicate a star whom the adjective *śakraḍaivatām* could qualify. But we are amazed to see that Prof. Bhattacharyya has wrongly interpreted the word *śakraḍaivatām* as indicative of the star *Jyeṣṭhā*. It is true that the star *Jyeṣṭhā* also has Śakra as its presiding deity; but in the verse mentioned above the word *śakraḍaivatām* has no chance to indicate the star *Jyeṣṭhā* for the reason noted above.

Another point is that, according to Prof. T. Bhattacharyya the war broke out after seven days from the above speech of Kṛṣṇa. So, if the war would really break out in the *nakṣatra* *Jyeṣṭhā*, then the *nakṣatra* at the time of Kṛṣṇa's above speech must have been *Uttaraphalgunī*. But just after Kṛṣṇa's speech Sanjaya makes his statement saying that the *nakṣatra* at that time was *Sravanā* (*prājāpatya*) (Udyogaparban 143/8). This tallies with the testimony of the *Bhārataśāvitri* that the war started in the *nakṣatra* *Bharanī*.

Another important verse of the *Mahābhārata*. in which the star on the last day of the war is recorded, has also been misinterpreted by Prof. Bhattacharyya. At this place, his lack of knowledge in Sanskrit Grammar was mainly responsible for such a misconception. The verse in question, which is a statement of Baladeva reads as follows :

'catvāriṃśadahānyadya dve ca me niḥsṛtasya vai
pusyeṇa samprayātosmi śravane punarāgataḥ.'

Sālyaparban 34/6.

In this verse there are two different words *pusyeṇa* and *śravane* which are indicative of the different stars. The word *pusyeṇa* is the resulting form of the word *pusyā* (name of a star) in the 3rd case-ending, singular number. Before turning into the above form the word *pusyā* lost an affix (*an*) after it, which took place by Pāṇini's rule '*nakṣatreṇa*

yuktaḥ kālāḥ (4. 2. 3)' and was dropped by the rule '*lubaviṣeṣe* (4. 2. 4). Thus, in accordance with Pāṇini's rule '*nakṣatre ca lupi* (2. 3. 45)' the word *puṣyā* has the optional 3rd case-ending with it, in the sense of the locative case. If the metre would not be disturbed, then we could replace the form *puṣyena* by its optional form *puṣye* as well. Thus it is clear that the word *puṣyena* in the above verse means 'on the day with the star *Puṣyā*'. The statement of Baladeya, therefore shows that he went out (for his pilgrimage) on a day, in which the star was *Puṣyā*, and that he returned on the day (the last day of the war) on which the star was *Sravaṇā*.

Unfortunately, Prof. T. Bhattacharyya falling under a serious misconception has translated the verse in the following way: 'To-day, the fortysecond *tithi* (lunar day) of my pilgrimage has been completed with the *nakṣatra* *Puṣyā*; for I went out in the *nakṣatra* *Sravaṇā*; now I have come again back to you.' According to him, the third case-ending in the form *puṣyena* was used in the sense of *apavarga*, by the rule '*adhvakālābhyāmapavarge*'. This he thought, because of his wrong idea that there was no rule for using *trītiyā* in the sense of *adhikaraṇa*. If Prof. Bhattacharyya would read Pāṇini thoroughly, he could find relative rule which we have already quoted above. In a very popular verse also example of the third case-ending in the sense of locative case (*adhikaraṇa*) is found, and is illustrated by the renowned grammarian Bhaṭṭaji Dikṣita while interpreting the above rule '*nakṣatre ca lupi*' of Pāṇini. The line of the above verse in which such an example is found runs as follows '*mūlenāvāhayeddevīm śravaṇe ca visarjjayet*' (One should bring in the goddess in the star *Mūlā* and make a send off to her in the star *Sravaṇā*). As in the above case the different words *mūlena* and *śravaṇe*, though with different case-endings, express the same sense of the locative case, similarly in the above verse of the *Mahābhārata* also, the different words *puṣyena*, and *śravaṇe* though formed with different case-endings convey the same sense of the locative case.

It is noticeable that the testimony of the *Bhāratasūvitri* that the *nakṣatra* *Bharanī* was fallen on the first day of the war also falls in line with the above verse of the *Mahābhārata*, which tells us that on the last day of the war star was *Sravaṇā*. It appears that the war commenced in the last part of *Bharanī* and it ended in the first part of *Sravaṇā*. The difference of one *nakṣatra* went in the form of *bhukti*.

As Prof. T. Bhattacharyya wrongly held that the war broke out on the new moon day of the month of *Kārttika*, his approach for finding out the *nakṣatra* on the starting day of the war was also wrong. It is known to all the Sanskrit scholars that the full-moon day of the month of *Kārttika* is bound to fall in the *nakṣatra* *Kṛttikā*, which causes the very name *Kārttika* to the month. The new moon being the 16th day from the full moon of the month is bound to fall in or around the *nakṣatra* *Jyēṣṭhā*. This appears to be the reason for which Prof. Bhattacharyya took the

nakṣatra Jyeṣṭhā instead of *Bharanī* to have fallen in the first day of the war. But it is very clearly said in the *Bhārata-sāvitṛi* that the *tithi* in the first day of the war was the thirteenth lunar day of the bright fortnight. If this testimony of the *Bhāratasāvitṛi* is accepted, then there will be no bar to take *Bharanī* and *Śravaṇā* respectively on the first and the last day of the war.

What misguided Prof. Bhattachayya was that in the modern almanac the *Bhīṣmāṣṭamī* or the day of Bhīṣma's demise is found to be recorded as the eighth lunar day of the bright fortnight of the month of Māgha. If this be correct, then the first day of the war could not be the thirteenth lunar day of the bright fortnight or so; because, according to the *Mahābhārata* there was a gap of 67 days between the 1st day of the war and the death of Bhīṣma. It is known to all that Bhīṣma fell on his arrow-bed on the tenth day of the war. In a verse of the *Mahābhārata* Bhīṣma is found telling Yudhiṣṭhira that he stayed upon the said bed of arrows for 58 days, after which he died. The verse runs as follows:

'astapañcāśatam rātryaḥ śayānasya ca me gatāḥ
śareṣu niśitāgreṣu yathā varṣasātantathā.'

Anuśāsanaparban: ch. 167

Prof. Bhattacharyya took the modern almanac as undoubtable authority, by ignoring the verses of the *Bhārata-sāvitṛi*, as well as the firm remarks of Nilakaṇṭha himself. With a view to complying with the modern almanac, he did not hesitate even to misinterpret some important lines of the *Mahābhārata*.

Having found Vyāsa (the author of the *Mahābhārata*), Nilakaṇṭha (the commentator on the *Mahābhārata*) as well as the learned author of the *Bhārata-sāvitṛi* on the one side and the modern almanac on the other; we choose to hold the latter as incorrect record, than a combination of the former three authorities. Thus, we fully agree with the author of the *Bhārata-sāvitṛi* as well as with Nilakaṇṭha that the *Bhīṣmāṣṭamī* should be rightly observed in the eighth lunar day of the *mukhya Paurṇ* and *gaṇa Māgha*, and that the war started on the thirteenth lunar day of the bright fortnight of the month of *Kārttika* both *mukhya* and *gaṇa*.

As regards the observation of Bhīṣma's death on the 8th lunar day of the bright fortnight of Māgha, we assume that, the day was fixed for his memory not for identifying the date of his death, but with a special intention to show respect to him. Even now-a-days some particular dates are found to be fixed for memorizing some great men or events; but on different occasions, the date does not tally with the date of birth or death of the person concerned or the occurrence of the event. Another point is that the bright fortnight is regarded by the Hindus as sacred for different religious rites. This might have been a cause for fixing the day in the bright fortnight instead in the dark fortnight.

(iv) It is also noticeable that an equation worked out even by a highly skilled and talented mathematician fails to bring out the correct result, if the value given to x, y or any other letter happens to be incorrect. Prof. Bhattacharyya also has failed to bring out the correct date of the war, for the reason that his calculation was based upon a wrong assumption. He assumed that the sun was in the *nakṣatra Jyēṣṭhā* at the out-break of the war. But, as in fact, the war broke out in the solar month of *Kārttika*, the sun in no way could take place in the *nakṣatra Jyēṣṭhā* at that time. It has been unanimously accepted by all the astronomers that, with the commencement of the solar month *Kārttika*, the sun enters in the second half of the *nakṣatra Citrā*. After passing the said *nakṣatra* he enters in *Svātī* and then in *Viśākhā*. When the month reaches its end, the sun passes only the three-fourth of the *nakṣatra Viśākhā*. The sun reaches the *nakṣatra Jyēṣṭhā* in the latter half of the month of *Agrahāyana*. The fact that the war broke out in the solar month of *Kārttika* will be clear from the following facts:

- (a) That, Bhīṣma died on the 68th day from the starting of the war.
- (b) That, his death occurred on the day of the *Uttarāyana Saṁkrānti*, which could not be other than the day that joins the two different solar months *Pauṣa* and *Māgha*.

In the *Mahābhārata* we see Bhīṣma asking Yudhiṣṭhira for coming to him at the time of his death which was scheduled to take place on the day of the *Uttarāyana Saṁkrānti*. The verse runs as follows:

‘āgantavyaṅca bhavatā samaye mama pārthiva
vinivṛtte divākare pravṛtte cottarāyane.’

Anuśāsanaparban 166/14

Eng: ‘Oh king! you should come at the time of my death, which will occur just after the returning motion of the sun, and with the arrival of the *Uttarāyana*.

Now arises the question as to whether the term *Uttarāyana* in the above verse means the day recorded in the almanac for observing some social and religious functions, or that in which the sun took to its northward motion. According to our consideration, the term *Uttarāyana* in the present case means the former; because, if it would be otherwise, the other two words ‘*vinivṛtte divākare*’ could not take place in the verse. The words quoted above mean ‘the sun having turned its motion; and the term *Uttarāyana* means a particular day recorded in the almanac for observance of some religious functions. Thus, from the use of the above both in the verse, we clearly understand that Bhīṣma meant the day which arrived just after the turning point of the sun, and was popularly known as a sacred day i.e., the day of the *Uttarāyana Saṁkrānti* recorded in the almanac. The fact that Bhīṣma died on the *Uttarāyana Saṁkrānti* day is also clear from another statement of Bhīṣma himself,

in which he describes it as the arrival of the month of *Māgha* (of course the solar month of *Māgha*). His statement runs as follows:

māgho = yaṃ samanuprāpto māsaḥ saumyo yudhiṣṭhira'.

Anuśāsanaparban 167/28

The adjective *saumya* in the sentence simply means 'beautiful'. It cannot be taken in the sense of 'lunar' for the reason that his death occurred in the *thirtieth* of *aṣṭamī*, which falls after a considerable period from the starting point of the lunar month.

That the day of the *Uttarāyana-saṃkrānti* is a very sacred one, is also known from some other verses of different books belonging to both the *Smṛti* and the *Purāṇa* schools. For example, we may quote a line from the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* (vii/14/20) which runs as follows:

'ayane viṣuve kuryād vyatīpātē dinakṣaye'

Here, the shortened term *ayana* is used for the *Uttarāyana-saṃkrānti* and is counted as one of the holy days for performance of some sacred rites. If the fact is admitted that *Bhīṣma* died on the day of the said *Uttarāyana* and that this day was the 68th from the starting of the war, then the fact must be admitted that the war started in the last part of the solar month *Kārttika*, when the sun existed in the *nakṣatra Viśākhā* and nowhere else.

Prof. Tarakesvar Bhattacharyya has made the following calculation and has relied mostly on it for determining the date of the *Bhārata War*. Let me quote a few lines from his book:

'In the time of the *Bhārata War*, the sun took 67 days to pass from *Jyēṣṭhā* to the southern solstice. In 499 A. D. he took 40·2 days, to move from the star *Jyēṣṭhā* to the southern solstice for that year. In 1900 A.D. he took only 20·8 days to cover the space from *Jyēṣṭhā* to the southern solstice of this year. Thus, in the interval between the *Bhārata War* and 1900 A.D., the solstice shifted through a distance equal to 67 - 20·8 or 46·2 days' journey of the sun, that is through 46·2, and in the interval between 499 A.D. and 19 A.D., i.e., in 1401 years, the solstice shifted through 40·2 - 20·8 or 19·4 days' journey of the sun, that is 19·4. If we put 'D' for the year of the *Bhārata War*, then the interval between the *Bhārata War* and 1900 A.D. may be put down as 1900 D. This is practically a sum of simple proportion:

$$\frac{1900 D}{1401} = \frac{46 \cdot 2}{19 \cdot 4} \quad \therefore 1900 D = \frac{46 \cdot 2}{19 \cdot 4}$$

$$\therefore D = 1900 - 3335 = -1435 \text{ A.D.} = 1436 \text{ B.C.}'' \quad (33).$$

We have already said above that, at the break-out of the *Bhārata War*, the sun did not stay in the *nakṣatra Jyēṣṭhā*, but he stayed in the *nakṣatra Viśākhā*. It has also been shown by us that *Bhīṣma* did not die on the day of the southern solstice, but he died on the day of the *Uttarāyana*

Samkrānti, Thus, both the first and the last points of calculation being misplaced, Prof. T. Bhattacharyya could not find out the correct date.

He, however, for the same purpose has tried to give another kind of calculation, in which he took a period of 72 years for a shift 1° approximately of the sun, and the entire shift according to him was $46^\circ 2'$ (shifting of the sun from *Jyesthā* to the southern solstice). Let us now quote his calculation below:

"If 72 years be required to produce a shift of 1° approximately, then what would be the time required to produce a shift of $46^\circ 2'$? The time required would be $46^\circ 2' \times 72 = 3327$ years. But this shift ($46^\circ 2'$) was assumed to have been produced in 1900 years.

$$1900 - D = 3327 \text{ years.}$$

$$D = 1900 - 3327 = -1427 \text{ A.D.} = 1428 \text{ B.C. !}^{34}$$

We like to add here that, this second calculation of Prof. T. Bhattacharyya also having been based on the same wrong footing is bound to be incorrect. It is unfortunate that the learned professor of Mathematics has ignored the basic difference which always exists between a solar and a lunar month. The difference in the shift of the sun in the time basis, exists in the lunar months only.

If there would exist any basic difference in shifting of the sun in the solar months in the time basis, then we could try to calculate in the process shown by Prof. Bhattacharyya. But in fact, there does not exist any basic difference. In the fourth quarter of the solar month *Kārttika*, the sun always stays in the star *Viśākhā*. He stayed in the said star thousands or even millions of years ago, and till today he stays in it. Similarly, in the day of the *Uttarāyana Samkrānti* the sun stays in the *Uttarāṣādhā* nakṣatra every year. The process of calculation shown by Prof. Bhattacharyya, therefore does not help us even the least for determining the correct date of the Bhārata War.

I have already said above that a new era came into being in the year (3186 - 2526 =) 610 B.C. Probably, this new era was short-lived, and neither the court-poet of Pulakeśin II nor the author of the *Rājataranginī* had any knowledge of it, who therefor wrongly held the Bhārata War to have occurred in the year 653 of the Kali Age. Or the text of the *Rājataranginī* mentioned above may be explained in a different way. The author of the book simply says that the *Kurupāṇḍavas* existed in the year 653 of the Kali Age. The term *Kurupāṇḍava* may literally mean the descendants of Kuru and the Pāṇḍavas. It is wellknown that one of the renowned predecessors of the Pāṇḍavas was Kuru by name, and the *Vāyupurāṇa* (ch. 99) tells us that after abdication of Yudhisthira, the eldest of Pāṇḍavas 25 generations of his descenadants ruled from his throne. The same fact is admitted by some other Purāṇas i. e. *Bhāgavata*, *Viṣṇu* etc. as well. It may not be unreasonable to hold that the said descen-

dants of Yudhiṣṭhira ruled for 653 years more, and that the text of the *Rājatarāṅgi* has indicated this fact by saying that the family of Kuru and the Pāṇḍavas ruled up to the 653rd year of the Kali Age. As regards the names of the 25 generations who ruled during the period, these are also recorded in the *Vāyupurāṇa* (ch. 99) with some details.

Another point is that the testimony of the *Mahābhārata*, *Bhāgavata*, *Kālidāsa*, *Bhāskarāchāryya* and such other authorities are more trustworthy than that of the court-poet of Pulakesin II and the author of the *Rājatarāṅgi*. The *Mahābhārata* is held in such a high regard in India that it has been described as the Fifth of the *Vedas* (35); its authority, therefore cannot be disregarded.

As regards the arguments of Mr. A. B. Keith that the absence of any mention of the Bhārata War in the *Vedas* disproves its historicity. I simply like to remind my readers that the *Vedas* were composed long before the occurrence of the Bhārata War.

On the strength of the above evidences and reasonings, we may firmly hold that the Bhārata War started in the month of Kārttika and it came to an end in the month of Agrahāyana corresponding November in the year 3186 B.C.

This paper was read at an Inter University Seminar held on 17.9.1965 (at the Asutosh Hall, Calcutta) under the auspices of the Centre of Advanced Study in Ancient Indian History and Culture, University of Calcutta.

FOOT NOTES

1. Quoted by Girindrashekar Bose in his '*Purān Prabesh*'.
2. *Ancient Geography of India*, by Alexander Cunningham; p.413
3. *Purān Prabesh*, p.152
4. F. E. Pargiter, '*Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*'; p.182
5. *tapasā brahmacharyeṇa vyasya vedam sanātana-mithāsamlmañcakre punyam satyavatisutah. Adiparban 1/54 bhārataśyetihāsasya punyam granthārthasamṛyutām samskāropagatām brāhmīn nānāśāstropavrmhitām. Ibid 1/19*
6. *itlhāso bhāratañca vālmīkikhāvyameva ca. Brahmaparvartapurāṇa; Śrīkrṣṇajanamakhaṇḍa; ch. 133; verse-23.*
7. F. E. Pargiter, '*Ancient Historical Tradition*'; p. 182
8. Coronation of Parīkṣit took place 36 years after the great battle, as known from the Mausalaparban, ch.1, and he reigned for 60 years, which is known from a verse recorded in the Adiparban (44/17) as a statement of the ministers of Janamejaya. The verse runs as follows

'prajā imāstava pitā śaṣṭivarsānyapālayat
tato dīṣṭāntamāpannah sarveṣāṃ duḥkhamāvahat.'

9. *Itihāsam purānam pañcamam vedānām vedam*. Chāndogyopaniṣad VII. 1. 2. Here reference to the Purāṇa-literature and its approval as a high authority is found.
10. *saptāśvivedasaṃkhyam śakakālamapāśya*
11. See the *Introduction to the Mahābhārata* (in Bengali) and the Bengali book 'Yudhisthirer Samay' by M.M. Haridas Siddhantavagish.
12. *varṣaiḥ sindhura-darśanāmbara-guṇatryāte kalau sammite*. Jyotirvidābharana 22/21.
13. *The Age of the Imperial Unity* (Bhāratiya Vidyābhavan), Voll. II (3rd edition, 1960); foot-note under page 125
14. *triṃśatsu trisahasreṣu bhāratādāhavāditāḥ
saptāśva-śatayukteṣu gateṣvabdeṣu pañcasu
pañcāśatsu kalau kālē ṣaṭsu pañcaśateṣu ca
samāsu samatītāsu śakānāmapi bhūbhujām*.
15. *antare caiva samprapte kali-dvāparayorabhūt
samantapañcake yuddham kurupāṇḍavasenayoh*. 'Adīparban 2/13
16. *yātāḥ saṃmanavo yugāni bhamitānyanyad yugānghritrayam
nandādrindugunāstathā śakanrasyānte kalervatsarāḥ*.
Siddhānta-śiromaṇi; Kālamānadhya.
17. *śāko navāgendukṛśānuuyuktāḥ kalerbhavatyabdagano yugasya*.
Makaranda, quoted by M.M. Haridas Siddhantavagish.
18. *saṃkhyānādeṣe śatam*.
19. *Mauṣalaparban*, ch. 1.
20. *yasmin kṛṣṇo divam yātastasmīnneva tadāhani
pratipannam kaliyugamiti prāhuḥ purāvidāḥ*. Bhāgavata XII.2.27
*yadaiva bhagavadviṣṇoraṃśo yāto divam divja
vasudevakulodbhūtatadāiva kalirāgataḥ*.
Viṣṇupurāṇa; Part IV; ch.24
- 21) *pañcānām pāṇḍuputrāṇām jyeṣṭhabhrātā yudhiṣṭhirah
tasyāṣṭaśatasahasrā gavām vargāḥ śatam śatam*. 15
*bhūtam bhavyam bhaviṣyaṅca yaccānyad gogataṃ kvacit
na me = styaviditam kiñcit samantāddāsa yojanam*. 17
- 22) For details, please see the present author's article 'Date of Mahāpa-dmananda', published in the *Mother*, Vol. XI. No. 3, pp. 95—101.
- 23) *yadā maghābhyo yāsyanti pūrvāśādhām maharṣayah
tadā nandāt prabhṛtyeṣa kalirvṛddhiṃ gamiṣyati*.
Bhāgavatapurāṇa XII. 2. 25.
- 24) *prayāsyanti yadā caite pūrvāśādhām maharṣayah
tadā nandāt prabhṛtyeṣa kalirvṛddhiṃ gamiṣyati*.
Viṣṇupurāṇa IV. 24. 39.
- 25) *trīṇi varṣasahasrāṇi mānuṣeṇa pramāṇataḥ
triṃśad yāni tu varṣāṇi mataḥ sapṭarṣi-vatsarah*.

- 26) *Political History of Ancient India* by Hemchandra Raychaudhury, Section VIII, pp. 229—230.
- 27) *The Age of Imperial Unity* (Bhāratiya Vidyābhavan), pp. 216.
- 28) See foot-note No 22 above.
- 29) *Mausalaparban*; ch. 1.
- 30) *hemante prathame māsi śuklapakṣe trayodaśim pravṛttaṃ bhārataṃ yuddhaṃ nakṣatre yamadaivate.*
Bharatasāvitrī quoted by MM. Haridas Siddhantavagish.
- 31) *amāvasyāntu sandhyāyāṃ rājā duryodhano katah.* Ibid.
- 32) For other details regarding the starting point of the Kali Era, please see the present author's article '*The Kali Era and its Reliability*', published in the *Mother*, Vol. x. No. 5, pp. 239-243.
- 33) *The Date of the Bhārata War*; page. 18.
- 34) Ibid, pp. 18-19.
- 35) *kārṣṇaṇca pañcamam vedam yanmahābhārataṃ smṛtam.*

Reviews and Notices of Books

English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 1600-1660 by Douglas Bush, Oxford University Press. Second Edition (Paperback). £ 1.10.

Of the original project of twelve volumes of the Oxford History of English literature formulated in 1935, nearly half remain yet to be published. Some volumes, e.g., the volume under review here (Douglas Bush's *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century*) were published as early as 1945 while several volumes of the project, have not been published yet, if they have been written at all. The Publisher's Note to the Late F. P. Wilson's *The English Drama, 1458-1585* (1969) informs the reader that according to the original plan Wilson could not completely prepare the work for the press before his death, and the typescript left by him and edited and revised by G. K. Hunter, represents only a half of the projected volume so that the position now is that the other part of the volume (1585-1652) still remains to be published, if it has been written at all. Of the other volumes, the first two, each with two parts, covering the pre-Norman Conquest period and Middle English literature, have not yet been published.

That the project of 1935 is far from fulfilment in 1973, need not surprise any one. All scholarly multi-volume projects necessarily spread over decades, and not unoften (as in the Oxford History of Literature series) have proved to be complicated long-term endeavours. An unavoidable consequence of this is that it is not possible for decades—not until the entire set is available—to acquire a synoptic estimate of the series. That Douglas Bush's volume has now appeared in paper-back, testifies to the publisher's recognition of its popularity (along with C. S. Lewis's and J. I. M. Stewart's volumes) but unhappily, a synoptic view cannot yet be taken. Further, it has to be noted that the Oxford series differs basically from the Cambridge series inasmuch as it presents the literary history of a period from the point of view of a single person. More than in the Cambridge volumes, here the stamp of the historian's personality has a free play. The present edition lacks chronological tables and the bibliographical accounts of the original edition—tables and accounts in which some of us found fascinating bases of knowledge but which, perhaps, will not interest the undergraduates who may be expected to form the bulk of the purchasers of this paper-back. In other respects, this edition is not at all different from the first and second editions.

Here then is a work of literary history of which the value rests on an individual scholar-critic's estimate of a crucial phase of England's literary history. For me, the essence of this phase which is the basic theme of the

book has been postulated in the first two paragraphs of the book. The Seventeenth Century is 'the most conspicuous modern example, unless we except our own age' of an age of transition where, to an unusual degree '*disruptive and creative* forces reach maturity and combine to speed up the normal process of change.' Again 'it is the impact of modernism upon medievalism.' Bush is not a man to blow bubbles of apparent aphorisms; his terse, condensed statements are adequately developed through arguments, analyses and evidences. The coexistence of modernism and medievalism in the seventeenth century is shown with reference to historical events and literary trends. And this attempt to bring out the central essence of literary phenomena ought to be the aim of every literary historian. The relation between literature and history (ever since with the French Encyclopaedists, the historical consciousness began to dominate the intellectual universe of mankind) has occupied the attention of the students of the arts for a long, long time. It was not for nothing that Matthew Arnold, writing more than a century ago, found it necessary to warn his readers against confining themselves to the historical estimate.

The Marxian view is now familiar, almost to the extent of being stale. When Engels writes that "In every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organization necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up and from which alone can be explained the political and intellectual history of that epoch", the danger to literary criticism becomes obvious. More acceptable (though with strong reservations) would be Carlyle's doctrine: "The history of a nation's poetry is the essence of its history, political, scientific, religious. With all these the complete historian of poetry will be familiar: the national physiognomy, in its finest traits, and through its successive stages of growth, will be clear to him; he will discern the grand spiritual tendency of every period, which was the highest Aim and Enthusiasm of mankind in each, and how one epoch evolved in itself from the other." Douglas Bush, for purposes of this book, is neither a Marxist nor a Calvinist visionary; he has steadily held the interests of literature aloft. He has collected and examined all relevant data that explain and illuminate the many and various literary phenomena of the early seventeenth century; he has no less constantly remembered the individual writers whose writing convey to the reader a sense of these phenomena. Thus, Milton invariably requires a whole chapter to himself and Jonson and Donne (along with some other writers) are presented in a crowded chapter. The first chapter, 'The Background of the Age', is a model of scholarly criticism, rich in abundant details, firm in its intellectual and imaginative progression, graceful in style. The chapters on 'Political Thought', 'Science and Scientific Thought' and 'Religion and Religious Thought' should be of great value to Indian students of English literature, for whom the complexities and intricacies (what

Grierson happily called "cross-currents") of the seventeenth century are not easy to understand. When Donne writes, 'And new philosophy calls all in doubt' but also writes that 'Air and Fire but thick gross bodies were' and, again, questions, 'And what essential joy can't thou expect Here upon earth?' the Indian writer may discern some link with the sceptical Charvakian philosophy of two millenia ago rather than with the Royal Society. And yet the distance between Donne and Newton—not chronological alone but spiritual too—was brief indeed. It will also sharpen the Indian student's realisation of the essential unity of thought in the seventeenth century to find Sir Thomas Browne being evaluated in the chapter on Religion and Religion Thought, to understand the link between Bacon and Shelley's *Triumph of Life*, to be told that Bacon's *Instauratio Magna* is linked with *The Fairy Queen* and *The History of the World*.

This book, the product of mature and encyclopaedic scholarship, refined appreciation of all that testifies to the glories of the human mind, and style at its best, ought to be on the shelves of all serious students of literature.

AMALENDU BOSE

"Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers, 1893-1902"—Edited by Sri Sankari Prasad Basu and Sri Sunil Bihari Ghosh : First published in 1969 by Dineschandra Basu and Basu Bhattacharyya and Co. (Pvt.), Ltd., 80/7, Grey Street, Calcutta—6. Distributors—Bookland Private Limited, 1, Sankar Ghosh Lane, Calcutta—6 and Modern Book Agency Private Limited, 10, Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta—4, pp. 735. Price Rs. 60 only.

Swami Vivekananda was a man of multidimensional personality. A prophet, a seer, a philosopher, a Sannyasin, a nationalist, a leader of thought, a man of action, a rationalist, a universalist, a humanist—Swamiji may be said to have been the maker of a new era in Indian thinking and approach. Had there not been a Swamiji, Mother India with her resurgent tone and vision would not have been what she is to-day. That is not to say that Mother India as she is to-day has come up to the ideal of Swamiji's dream. Swamiji's Mother India stands as an ideal—far, far above the Mother as we see her to-day. Nevertheless, Swamiji's ideal had been a signpost, a beacon light towards which the actual India was destined to move. It was an India—-independent, united and solidified with a creative urge for discovering her identity. In fact India re-discovered her own self and identity in the community of Man only after Swamiji appeared on the Indian scene. A worthy disciple of a more worthy master Swamiji

carried the message of India to the world which was simply struck dumb to see real India with her rich heritage. He issued a call to every Indian to discover his real self and to dedicate his real self to the cause of Mother's glory. The real 'I' is not the narrow 'I' dipped in petty self: the real 'I' is the elevated 'I' merged in 'Thou' and in 'All'. Such was the ancient voice of India. Swamiji rediscovered that voice, gave fresh vitality to it and made it meaningfully significant for a world which was arrogantly nationalistic and selfish. Swamiji also spoke of "the solidarity of human relationships and interests which has been affirmed by all the religions of the world." His purpose was the "widening of the empire of our beautiful philosophy and the spreading of its priceless blessings among the nations of the West." If the world had heeded more faithfully Swamiji's call there would have been a Religion of Humanity which could act as a solid base for the Common Law of Mankind.

Such a multi-dimensional personality is to be read, re-read, re-interpreted and re-assessed through the ages, if one is to understand correctly the real meaning and direction of the message he delivers to the world. Plato is being read, re-read and re-interpreted even to-day: so also Aristotle, Rousseau, Machiavelli, Hegel, Marx and many other leaders of thought in the history of the human race. Swamiji cannot be an exception to this norm of analysis. With the discovery of new materials the minds of the leaders of thought in human history are sought to be re-read in the new context and under a changed perspective. The new dimensions thus thrown up through this analytical research tool add necessary elements in completing the total picture of the man under study. But for finding out the new dimensions, new data and fresh materials are necessary.

In the case of Swamiji these new data and materials have been sought to be supplied in the book under review: "Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers, 1893-1902" fills in a much felt gap from that standpoint. The editors deserve unqualified praise for bringing out the volume.

But can newspaper reports act as dependable source materials for research? There may be doubts. Newspaper are always controlled by particular interests or groups and often take partisan character. They not unoften cater half-truths and untruths to serve partisan ends. They often give a distorted image of the leaders.

Nevertheless newspapers reflect the public opinion; they are expected to act as a mirror of the public mind. All the newspapers controlled by all possible interests can, when taken together,—through a process of elimination, cancellation, pluses and minuses—perhaps give a more or less correct picture of the man in the public mind. And these varied reactions are essential for understanding "Worldly Vivekananda", as the editors say. And when the controlling interests behind the newspapers are known, a more accurate analysis and assessment would be possible. Hence the picture of a leader of thought in public mind can best be seen if one reads

the man as he appears in all the different newspapers of his time. Contemporary reactions to the leader's ideas, policies and actions give many significant glimpses into the nature of the leader's multi-coloured personality. And when these reactions as recorded in the contemporary newspapers are assessed and analysed from a safe time-distance of about three quarters of a century; there is no risk of emotional involvement or of losing objectivity in analysis, approach and assessment.

The period 1893 to 1902 was the most important period in the life of Swamiji. He sailed for America on 31st May, 1893, secured victory for India in the Parliament of Religions in September, 1893 by proclaiming to the world the essence of Hinduism as a religion, made many friends there, found some devotees, condemned hypocrite christians by saying "You are not Christians, Return to Christ", invited invectives on him from many of them and answered them back, went to England from America twice and came back to India on 15th January, 1877. He again went to America for the second time in June, 1899. Therefrom he went to Paris in 1900 and to Egypt via Vienna, Athens and Constantinople. He came back to India in December, 1900. His was a mission of spiritual conquest of the world and in this he largely succeeded. He passed away on 4th July, 1902 when he was only 39.

The volume under review gives the story of the reactions in the Indian mind about Vivekananda's activities and ideas, as recorded in the contemporary (1893-1902) newspapers and periodicals—both Indian and Anglo-Indian. Among the Indian newspapers and periodicals, there are 15 in the volume, the most important of which are *The Indian Mirror*, *The Bengalee*, *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *The Indian Nation*, *The Mahratta* and *The Indian Social Reformer*. Among the Anglo-Indian papers there are 7 in the volume, the most important of which are *The Statesman* and *Friend of India*, *The Pioneer*, *The Times of India* and *The Madras Mail*. The editors say that "they have covered the Indian-owned newspapers (in English) wholly and the Anglo-Indian newspapers in parts" (p.x). The idea is to give a picture of the reactions among different groups of people in different parts of India and thereby to lend to the whole thing an all-India character.

It is to the credit of the editors that they have followed the principle of objectivity and impartiality in getting the reports included in the volume. They have selected not only the portions that adore the Swami but also many others that seek to challenge and criticise the Swami and his views. One feels fascinated while going through the pages of the volume. It contains sufficient new materials for re-reading and re-interpreting Swamiji. It would be interesting for many to know that Calcutta was "in the throes of ecstatic hysterics at the return of Swami Vivekananda from his campaign in the Far West." It was arranged that on his arrival at the Sealdah Station he would first go to Ripon College in a horse-driven carriage and would

remain there for a short while. But so great was the enthusiasm among the young men that "the horses were unyoked and the carriage was drawn, along the whole way to Ripon College, by a number of people" (p. 153). Moreover so big was the crowd and so heavy was the rush that "several boys narrowly escaped being crushed to death at the Ripon College" (p. 153). The controversy between Swamiji and the Theosophists is highly interesting. Almost all relevant materials both in defence of and in challenge to Swamiji's point of view have been incorporated in the volume from contemporary newspapers reports. Anyone interested in further study of the matter may find these very helpful. The 'Kite' and 'Eagle', the 'Cat' and 'King' analogies on (p. 161) reveal the vile attacks on Swamiji by an over enthusiastic supporter of the Theosophists. There are many other details which are as much fascinating as they are revealing.

The volume, I am sure, will act as a very important source-material for further research studies on Swamiji. The editors have earned the gratitude of all interested in Vivekananda study for taking so much trouble for getting such a volume published. The volume should be a 'must' for every Library. Teachers and students of Indian philosophy, Indian political thought and Indian history will find many valuable materials in the volume. The editors have done a Herculean job and deserve admiration and thanks from all those who are interested in the growth and development of Vivekananda literature in all its forms.

SUBMAL K. MUKHERJEE

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

The following authors have contributed their learned articles in this Number :

DR. R. C. MAJUMDAR : Eminent Indian historian and a crusader against the travesty of truth in historicity. His present article is a re-appraisal of Raja Rammohan Roy. The opinion expressed herein is his own. Our readers may or may not share his view.

MR. D. K. RAY : Lectures in Museology in this University and represented India abroad on many seminars on Museology.

DR. TARAPADA SANTRA : Curator, Ananda Niketan Kirti Sala and associate of Late David McCutcheon ; Editor, "*Kaushiki*".

PROF K. MUKHERJEE : Dean & Head of the Department of Commerce of this University. His present article may be taken as an appendix to his previous article on Sanskritisation and Anti-Sanskritisation of Indian Culture published earlier in the Review. He has shown sociological rather than mercantile bias in his writings. To him commercial activity belongs to the category of social activity.

DR. RABINDRA KUMAR BHATTACHARYYA, SIDDHANTA SASTRI : Research Associate in the Centre for Advanced Study in Ancient Indian History and Culture and also lectures in Sanskrit in this University.

PROF. AMALENDU BOSE : Sir Gooroodas Professor and Head of the Department of English of the University. Although he is an Oxonian and Fellow of the International Association of Arts and Letters yet his contribution to his mother tongue Bengali is not less if not more. We are having his honorary service as Secretary, Board of Editors.

PROF. SUBIMAL K. MUKHERJEE : Surendranath Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science and Sociology of this University. His specialisation in Public International Law has won him wide acclamation.

Introduction by Salil Dutta, Manager, Calcutta Review.

The Manager begs leave to seize this opportunity for an apology. The erratic power-supply or what is called load-shedding in technical terms, has brought darkness at noon in West Bengal, particularly in the city of Calcutta. This has greatly interrupted printing of the Review at our Press which is power-based. Together with it paper has become scarce causing a high price of it. These compelling factors have forced us to reduce the number of pages of the Review. We hope our esteemed readers will bear with us considering the constraints under which we work.